LINKED LIVES
AND OTHER SERMONS

ALPHEUS B. AUSTIN, D. D.

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By

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TO

My Ministerial Brethren

WHOSE FELLOWSHIP HAS BEEN UNSPEAKABLY PRECIOUS, AND WHOSE KINDLY CONFERENCE ACTION HAS ELICITED THIS VOLUME, IT IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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LINKED LIVES
And Other Sermons

I.

LINKED LIVES.

"For none of us liveth to himself."

ROM. 14:7.

Paul has for ages received the credit due him as a great theologian, but it is only quite recently that he has begun to receive the belated credit due him as a great social philosopher. Sociologists not a few, and in steadily increasing numbers, are frank to state that their warmest inspirations and wisest guidance have come from certain stray sentences of his: sentences dropped incidentally in a letter to some Church or to some personal friend.

For instance we hear much about the newer philanthropy and its scientific methods of relieving the poor. If you investigate it, however, you will not have proceeded far before you discover that it is simply the elaboration of Paul's advice, "If any will not

work, neither let him eat." This huge card-index at the central office of the Associated Charities is a record of ten thousand individuals; a record to show whether they are worthy or not; a record which shows whether they will work when they are able and are given the chance.

One of the newest things in the sociological line is the Juvenile Court: giving to youthful offenders probation instead of punishment, and the kindly oversight of an interested friend instead of the fierce mercies of a turnkey, too often a mere hireling. But the Juvenile Court was anticipated almost twenty centuries by St. Paul, and it proceeds along the exact lines he laid down to Philemon for the treatment of the runaway Onesimus.

To-day we are to study one of his profound sociological statements: namely, that we all live *linked lives*. "None of us liveth to himself." I am aware that this phrase is not original with me; but I want to use it in a broader sense than that which is usually given to it. Ordinarily when people

speak of linked lives they mean those only that have been linked together by the wedding-ring. Their thought is that in such a case two personalities are joined together as two units in a chain are joined. The picture which I have rather in my mind is the unit in a piece of chain-armor. It is not linked simply to one other unit, but to many; not simply in one direction, but in every direction. It is fairly enmeshed in the fabric.

Nor are the links that join lives hard and fast things like those in a chain or in a piece of chain-armor. Rather you may compare them in their incipiency and growth to one of the great cables of a suspension bridge. You know that those cables begin as a single strand of steel wire that stretches from one anchorage to the other. But when once it is stretched, a traveling shuttle begins to journey from end to end, back and forth, weaving it larger and stronger. These links which bind us to others begin in weakness, but the shuttles of life are busy adding to them strands and strength: till at last the time comes when, though you may with diffi-

culty still sunder them, it means some kind of a tragedy if you do.

I. First of all we are LINKED TO OUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD. What we at one time call relationships we call at another time ties, and in speaking so we use language correctly. A relationship is a tie. Consider, as a beginning, the Filial Relationship: the link that exists between child and parent. That link was already forged when we came to consciousness. Apparently we had nothing to do with making it so strong as it really was. What had we done to bind our parents to us? The utilitarian philosopher tells us that all human ties are woven by mutual self-interest and the hope of reciprocal advantage. Well, prior to that time we had not been able to do much in the way of conferring reciprocal benefits. We could only buffet the air with our tiny fists and goo-goo with our unmanageable vocal chords and take the various contagious diseases as they came along. It was not because we had run errands or had answered the door-bell or had made the family conver-

sation more piquant that we were doted on by a mother and father in that infantile period. We were loved as babes: simply and solely because we were babes. God has formed the human heart that way. He has made babyhood a most appealing thing. Yon mother can not handle her chubby, dimpled babe without having a surge of impulse come over her to caress him. She can not hear his sobs without melting to pity. She can not note his helplessness without glorying in the fact that she can mother him and be a human Providence to him. Even the mysteries of his being irresistibly attract her. Sometimes he looks so serious, almost portentous; what can he be thinking of? And she breaks into the refrain:

> "Who can tell what a baby thinks?
> Who can follow the gossamer links,
> By which the manikin feels his way
> Out from the shore of the great unknown,
> Blind and wailing and alone
> Into the light of day?"

The very feeling that one is thus shut out of his life augments the eagerness with

which we await the day of complete understanding. O, it is blessedly true that not even the tiny infant lives to himself! He is a little galvanic battery that we can not let go of if we would, and that we would not let go of if we could. The only shocks he gives us are shocks of pleasure. Small as he is, he is the world's greatest creator of values. He creates mirth and happiness. He augments human tenderness. He floods a home with sunshine. He makes more copious the fountain of love that wells up out of the hearts of men.

I say to you that Industrialism has no right to weaken this link that binds the parent to the child. It ought never to assign to the father seven working-days in the week, nor make his hours so long that his baby is always asleep when he is at home and he can scarcely be said to know his children. It has no right to subtract that sweetening, humanizing, refining influence from his life. He ought to have a chance to get down on all fours and play bear with his children. That is one of his inalienable

rights. That is the way for him to get "just wrapped up in his bairnies."

Still less has Industrialism any right to take the mother away from the care of her little child and call her into a shop for a ten or twelve-hour working-day. There is a book entitled "The Bitter Cry of the Children." I could not recommend it to you for light reading or bright reading. Notably is this true of the section which deals with working mothers. It tells us that in every large city there are thousands of so-called "little mothers:" that is to say, tender girls of seven or eight charged every day of the week with the entire care of the baby of the family while the mother is away at work. That is not good for either of the three: the mother, the "little mother," nor the baby. Time and again it has happened that the mother has had to go to her work with a heavy heart because baby was ailing. She was afraid to ask for a day off to nurse him, lest she might lose her job. Hurrying home at night, she has found the "little mother," till now a stranger to the appear-

ance of death, holding a cold, rigid form in her arms which she was vainly trying to waken. Is it any wonder that iron enters a mother's heart at such a moment, or that parents who have had one such experience are ripe for the sickle of the revolutionary propagandist!

We sing about the Summer Land, and comfort ourselves with the thought that we shall find each broken link over there; but I insist that the links which our greedy Industrialism has broken should be found and mended here and now. The best link God has forged—the link between the parent and the child—has been treated as if it were a cheap and negligible thing, and our generation has no more urgent task than that of restoring it to its place and power.

But we must not think of the Filial Relationship from the parental angle alone. The child soon ceases to be a passive partner, and becomes a very active partner in it. He is not very old before he shows his parents that affection is a game two can play

at. He returns love for love. He matches their pride in him by his pride in them. There surely were never any other such parents as his. They are not simply parents: they are paragons. They are the embodiment of all that is wise and good. Out of this mutual love and pride comes that priceless thing we call domestic happiness. The best feature of this purest of all forms of happiness is that it is so cheap as to be within the reach of all. I go into homes where a carpet can not be afforded for the floor nor a cloth for the table, and I find it there. It is the most democratic thing in the world.

But if love is the finest flower that can bloom in a home, obligation is its fruit. I thank God for having been reared in a rural community where that obligation had all the force of law. We rustics were at the farthest remove from admitting that a minor had any right to live to himself. In our language, "he was not yet *his own man.*" Until he was twenty-one his earnings were all to be turned in towards the family sup-

port. There is a beautiful development of common interest and budding manliness wherever that obligation is recognized. On the contrary, there is always a soul-tragedy where the obligation is repudiated. I stand by a trunk-line and note the vagrants clinging to the bumpers of the passing freight-train or huddled together at the blind end of the baggage-car on the Limited. They are a squad out of that great host who have broken away from all control save that of Wanderlust. That tatterdemalion army is made up for the most part of boys who have run away from home obligations and of husbands who have deserted their wives and children. They are living to themselves, if you please: or at least they think they are. But are they, really? What they have done is to quit living *for* people, and now they are trying to live *off of* people. Has the vagrant even cut the home tie, as he imagines? No, for yonder under the lamplight sits his poor mother, reading for the third time the description of a floater that has been recovered from the river, and

wondering, with her heart in her throat, if it can have been her boy. Every time she picks up a paper nowadays it is with a nameless dread that some news in it from the underworld will lay the last straw upon her breaking back.

Nor would I have it thought that this temptation to repudiate a filial obligation is limited to the lowly. Ask the manager of a Home for the Aged if it is. Say to him that the conditions of entrance strike you as rather drastic. He will answer that they are the rules all such homes have been forced to adopt in self-defense: rules designed to prevent children from heartlessly bundling off an aged parent to an institution instead of dutifully caring for him themselves. No doubt old people often become crotchety, but if there is a beautiful education to be had in caring for persons in their childhood, so also is there in caring for persons in their second childhood. They nursed us in our helpless infancy: it is but right that we should nurse them in their helpless age. Paul has another great social dictum on this

very point: "If any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."

But each of us is linked not only to our immediate family, but also to the entire connection. Helpfully linked, let me hasten to say. Your successes in life have not been your own exclusive successes: your people have helped you win them. "When you first stepped upon the stage and your heart went pit-a-pat," as the old rhyme relates, it was the sight of a liberal sprinkling of relatives in the audience, all of them beaming love and expectation, that heartened you and saved the situation. When you entered the lists for those Commencement honors which you finally won, that which gave you dogged persistence was the thought of the satisfaction you could give that bevy of uncles and aunts and cousins, not to mention the homefolks. When you emerged from school and went seeking a position, they spoke the timely words in your behalf that opened reluctant doors. Even when you

propounded the momentous question the rule still held good: they helped you win. Your sweetheart took time to answer. A woman always does take time, I believe; and a man always thinks it unaccountable that anybody should hestitate a moment on him. But it was not altogether about you she was hesitating: it was partly about your relatives. She was reasonably sure she could get along with you, but she did not know them quite well enough to be sure she could get along with them. Like a sensible girl, she took time to investigate; and you won her at last because your family connection would bear investigation. The Ritual for Matrimony means more than it says. It says, "I, John, take thee, Mary:" it means, "I, John, take thee, Mary: plus your family connection." "I, Mary, take thee, John: plus your family connection." Both connections were there to see it done: were they not? And your people all trooped up and kissed her, in token that anybody who was good enough for you was good enough for them. And her people all kissed the bridegroom next

after the bride, in token that thenceforth you belonged to them as much as she.

And if the wedding of two persons is a matter that deeply concerns two connections, so also is the parting of two wedded persons. One tragic element in divorce is that it usually means more than just two sundered and embittered persons: it means likewise two sundered and embittered connections. The woman's people are positive that it was the man's fault that the union came to grief, and the man's people are equally positive it was the woman's fault. Her people can not see it as anything but a humiliation that their relative should be publicly branded as a woman whom a man can not live with; and his people feel equally humiliated to have a man of their name branded as insupportable. The couple who part in haste and anger are entirely too prone to forget that others besides themselves are concerned in what they are doing. They are forcing their miseries on three large companies: their two connections, and the people who are friends of both connections. These

last are specially to be pitied. They are compelled to hear both sides, while they have to watch themselves constantly lest they let some word slip which will make them appear partisans of one side. Often, in trying to be fair to both parties, they give offense to both; and the grand total of one petty estrangement is three widespread estrangements. The pair who quarreled are like the farmer who started a July fire in the dry grass of his paddock: a fire that did not cease to spread and devour until it had laid waste a dozen adjacent farmsteads.

Let me widen this thought a little farther: we are linked not only to our immediate family and to our family connection, but also to our Race. We are Caucasians: we are tied up to that race. While any man may break the tie, it means a tragedy of some sort if he does. Probably you have all read of Simon Girty. The early histories of Ohio are full of his name, and they never fail to mention it with detestation. He was the man who led the Indians in their night-attacks upon defenseless homes. He was

the most bloody of them all with the scalping-knife. And yet he was not an Indian at all: he was a man of white blood, who had been captured by the Indians when a boy, and had adopted their ways, and had been adopted into their tribe. With his white blood, he had either to be better than the Indians or worse. He became worse. He knew how intensely the white settlers hated him, and he returned their hatred with an intensity to which the savages were strangers. He knew that the Indians were suspicious of him and constantly afraid he would grow tired of their way of life and try to leave them; and he felt he had to outdo them in their cruelty to prove his loyalty and contentment. Similarly the squaw-men of the Far West and the white men of the Orient who have mated with Asiatic women, have sunk to an abysmal depth of depravity which even the heathen in his blindness could not match. I stand in our metropolis before the fifty-five-story tower that is being built. Up aloft there, at a height so great they look like midgets, men are walking

from place to place on the steel girders, even as they swing out over the street. The noon-whistle blows, but those men can not come down by the simple process of letting go all hold. That would be suicidal. The Anglo-Saxon race is a splendid scaffolding under us that has lifted us far into the empyrean. No man can let go all connections with it and drop down to primitive levels, or to miscegenation with primitive races, without moral disaster usually irretrievable.

II. But we have relationships other than those of blood. We are LINKED TO OUR CLASS. I use the word in no invidious sense, as no synonym of caste, but only as a comprehensive term for our industrial or professional comrades. The fact of solidarity within these lines is unescapable. The workingman who scants his work when not closely watched, or who "soldiers" at his work, creates or confirms the impression that the average workingman is more concerned about his rights than his duties. His individual conduct affects adversely his class in general. The employer who sees in his men

nothing but "hands," and who resists every movement to ameliorate their condition, creates or confirms the belief that Capital is heartless and that corporations are soulless. His Shylock spirit still further strains the relations between Capital and Labor, and makes it harder than ever for his philanthropic competitor to approach his men from the vantage-ground of a mutual confidence. The tradesman who opens his shop Sundays, or who pays his salespeople a starvation wage, makes it harder, on what Professor Ely has called the Principle of the Twentieth Man, for his nineteen competitors to keep their shops closed on the Lord's Day and to pay their help a living wage. The minister who reveals himself as a place-seeker creates or confirms the belief that ministers in general are place-seekers. His hireling spirit brings all men of the cloth under the same suspicion. He contrives to make their job a little harder for all of them.

But some one will say that all this is lame logic; that one swallow does not make a summer; that the slack workman, the unfeeling

employer, and the mercenary minister do not prove that all workmen, all employers, and all ministers are tarred with the same stick. He will point me to the code of ethics that has been evolved in each industrial and professional class, and to which the great majority of that class are faithful: a code usually so just and sensible as to evoke universal commendation. The lameness of the logic is conceded; but so too must we concede the inveteracy of the inference. We are confronted not by a theory, but by a condition; and that condition has never been better stated than by St. Paul when he said, "Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it."

Then, too, as Christians we are linked to other disciples of Christ. We are a family, and the Church is the household of faith. In view of this fellowship no Church-member can pursue a selfish or wilful course without causing general pain or demoralization. A single Diotrephes, afflicted with megalomania and determined to have the pre-eminence, can fill a whole church with

politics. A single Ananias, with a penchant for scandal-mongering, can be as terrible as an army with banners. A single Demas, with an overweening love for this present world, can infect a whole membership with worldliness. It is as idle to say that the unit does not count as to say that a single member of the body does not count. Let that member be cancerous, and erelong the whole body will become diseased. Let your life or mine be unwholesome, and erelong some about us are bound to catch the infection. Through our individual unsoundness the life of the Church erelong will be vitiated and its influence impaired.

III. In the attempt to show that none of us liveth to himself we have not yet exhausted all our relationships. There is one more, greater than all the rest. We have a Divine Relative. As with all the other ties we have mentioned, we may break this supreme link if we choose, but again and emphatically it means a soul-tragedy if we do. One of these drouthy days you pass

what in other seasons was a bog. Yonder are the cat-tails, the calamus, and the rushes. They are all there, the same as last year, but how different! Then they were vigorous, succulent plants: now they are like so much fodder. And as you look, it comes home to you that one of the sacred writers had something to say about this desolation. Here it is: "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? So are the paths of all that forget God."

Then, too, think of His side of the case as well as your own. Your feelings when your children are not about you illustrate His feelings. Some of your children have gone away. While they were about the house, you had occasion more than once to reprimand them for their noise; but now that they are gone, you have more silence than you bargained for. You meet at the very door what James Whitcomb Riley calls a "loud lonesomeness." That oppressive loneliness sits down with you at the table. It goes out with you on the porch. It lies

down with you in bed. It makes you perfectly restless. It is the restlessness of a great and unappeased yearning. Did we but know it, the good Father above has infinite yearnings of that selfsame sort for His children who have left Him. Is there a sadder sentence in Holy Writ than that in which He says, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me?" Is there more concentrated pathos in any situation than that in which the One who came to show us the Father pictures Him as watching so constantly and intently for His prodigal son that He descries him while yet a great way off?

Shall He yearn for us in vain? Sometimes our children have to let us do that. It is necessary for their health that they go away on vacation, or for their education that they spend four years away at school. If they are homesick for us, and we for them, we must all of us even stand it. But there is no reason why anybody should be separated at all from his Heavenly Father. It

is a species of insanity in us to wish separation from Him, or to acquiesce in it. When the prodigal "came to himself" he gave proof of returning sanity by starting at once for his Father. Would God this might be for some here a home-coming day!

II.

THE URBANITIES OF LOVE.

"*Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*" 1 Cor. 13:7.

There is one of Paul's letters which is almost devoid of the ingredient of censure. It is scarcely needful to say that that letter is not the first to the Corinthians, nor the second, either. Give the Church at Corinth a little time, and it could be counted on to furnish occasion for instruction, correction, and reproof. In the portion of the letter just preceding that which we have reached, Paul has been blaming the people for misdirected ambitions. The Church of that day had some features not since duplicated. For instance, it not infrequently happened at one of its services that a member would suddenly rise and pour forth a fervid torrent of unintelligible language. The most of

those who heard him could not make out a word of it. It would appear that sometimes even he himself could not. But there was usually present when one spoke with tongues another who could interpret tongues, and thus at second hand the people found out what had been said. Naturally all this was very startling. To have either the gift of tongues or the gift of interpreting made of its possessor a marked man. Neither gift was very valuable to the Church, but both were showy. Consequently almost every Corinthian was covetous of the one gift or the other. Paul was not slow in diagnosing their trouble. They were more concerned about having showy qualities than about substantial. They were more desirous of being gifted than of being good. In fact each individual had such a passion for prominence that the peace of the Church was in fair way to be destroyed.

This weakness of the people Paul goes after with characteristic directness. He tells them they are coveting the wrong gift. They are losing sight of the greatest thing

in the world, which is none other than love. If they were to get their heart's desire—the ability to speak with the tongues of men and of angels—and had not love, they would be as strident and shallow as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. They were seeking things of a day—"Whether there be tongues, they shall vanish away:" as indeed they very soon did—but love would never fail. It was something elemental, and the need for it would be unending. The spectacular thing they were seeking was something they scarcely needed at all, while love was something they needed tremendously. It would at once and forever put a stop to the bickerings which disgraced their Church and jeopardized its future. If love came in, it was bound to work this transformation because of its very urbanities. Of these he mentions four.

1. The first is its PATIENCE: "Love beareth all things." The old Quaker woman was not very far wrong when she said to her husband, "John, I do think everybody in the world is a little queer, except thee and

me." We have our little idiosyncrasies, our eccentricities, and our pet notions. While everybody else has also an assortment, nobody's assortment is exactly like ours. And if we are ever brought into close relations with them, as in the Church we are, we shall find them rubbing against our angles and getting on our nerves. While there are a vast number of things to be *enjoyed* in Church-life, there are always a few things to be *endured.* There they are, and it is our duty to put up with them.

This unfortunately the good people of Corinth could not bring themselves to do. They were as touchy as steel traps. An evidence of this they very soon gave on the subject of preachers. Not one of them seemed able to control himself when he heard another than his own favorite praised. When Apollos came to labor among them, not a few of them went wild over him. They talked about him from morning till night. They were even so indiscreet as to talk Paul down in the attempt to talk their man up. And this was more than Paul's friends could

stand. They ought to have stood it, and it would soon have died out. They ought to have had love enough for the Church and for Christ to have borne with the indiscretions of these new partisans. On the contrary, they came back at them tit for tat. And when things reached that pass they had a Church split wide open. Then, as if two warring camps were not enough to arrest the work of God and give comfort to the devil, they proceeded to make the number four. The spirit of faction grows by what it feeds upon; and very soon Peter had his little clique of partisans. Most sacrilegious of all, there came to be a faction who were partisans of Christ. No other name would answer for them. They were mischievous in their zeal for Him. They were ready to fight for Him, but gave very little thought to living like Him.

We can never be grateful enough to Paul for the word of correction he spoke. He compares them to plants. He had set them out, and passed on. Apollos followed and watered them. I go into a seedsman's store

and examine a lot of packages. Each has on it printed directions for planting. Each tells what kind of a soil is required. One plant calls for a sandy soil; another for rich, black earth. One thrives best with a southern exposure and plenty of light; another must be planted in a sheltered place and have plenty of shade and moisture. Now, if we had as much Christian love as we ought to have, we should see that different personalities have different requirements and are bound to have different preferences. If it is our wisdom to think and let think, so likewise is it to love and let love: to love the person who appeals to us, and to let our neighbor alone if he is appealed to by a man of another type. If he should lose his head a little and think his man the only man, that is no reason why we should lose ours. Perfectly unintentionally, of course, he is giving us a chance to manifest the graces of magnanimity and patience, or to say all in a word: the "love that beareth all things."

There was another direction in which the Corinthian Church needed to exercise the

patience of love. They did not all see alike in the matter of meats. Some of them thought that no Christian should eat meat which according to custom had lain awhile before some idol before it was exposed for sale. They maintained that the Christian who bought it and ate it helped to perpetuate idolatry and became *particeps criminis*. They insinuated that he did not market as he prayed: he prayed for the extirpation of idolatry, but marketed for its perpetuation. Naturally this last indictment was a little galling to those excellent Corinthians who simply went into market and bought such meat as was set before them, without asking any questions about its history: a thing they did not feel they were called to do. It was a little more than they could stand. At least so they thought. But they ought to have stood it. They should have reflected that the good Lord has not run all men into the same mold. Some He has made Radicals, and some Conservatives; some inclined to lay stress upon the letter of the law, others inclined to be content with compliance with

the spirit of the law; some strict constructionists, others broad constructionists. As many men, so many minds. Beyond that region of certain ethics covered by the Ten Commandments there is a region of debatable ethics. The matters involved are non-essentials. In this borderland a man can practice all the self-denials demanded by the strict constructionist, and yet not prove himself thereby a Christian. Or he may refuse to follow the example of the strict constructionist, and yet not prove himself thereby a worldling. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. A truly Christian love will bear in others many a difference in practice from our own, if only it find there the essential things: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. Second in importance to this patience of love, if indeed second at all, is its TRUSTFULNESS: "Love believeth all things." There was a sad dearth of love's trustfulness in the Church at Corinth. Of this Paul himself had unpleasant experience.

Partly it grew out of his habit of self-support. As you know, he made it his practice to support himself by his trade. He had a purpose in it. Some men have an ambition to be independently rich: his ambition was to be independently poor. He would not allow himself to be beholden to anybody; and this course left him free to speak his whole mind to everybody. He made it plain by his manner of life that he was not preaching for the money there was in it, since he would not take so much as a denarius from them. He was seeking them, not theirs. He did not urge that other preachers should do the same. In fact, the rest took pay, and he never complains about it nor criticises them for it. They were following their convictions of duty just as he was following his. Alas for his quietude! the Corinthians had no such magnanimity. With their rank suspiciousness they took his self-support to mean more than was on the surface. They intimated that there was a good reason why he did not take an apostle's pay: it was because he was not really

an apostle and did not wish to have the question raised. And so he was forced to come out with a defense of his self-support, and of his bachelorhood, which they had also cited as a suspicious fact. He had to give them proofs of his apostleship, much as it went against the grain: the most impressive catalogue of heroism and sacrifice to be found in any literature.

But he was not worrying so much about himself as about them. What outlook was there for a people who spied on their neighbors, and who watched their back doors to see what kind of meat was delivered to them! What could God make of a Church so evil-minded and censorious that they spared not their best friend, but even called his good evil! He implores them to covet earnestly the best gift: namely, that frank-hearted, open love that sets down things not quite comprehended to good and not to evil.

This trustfulness of love is requisite not only for the peace of the Church, but also for its usefulness. You can save a great many persons by the simple process of trust-

ing them. It will well repay you to read the autobiography of Henry M. Stanley to see this working principle illustrated. He passed his childhood in an English workhouse: continually hectored and thrashed, and treated as if nothing could ever be made of him. From the workhouse he escaped and lived awhile among relatives: only again to be made daily to feel that he could never overcome the stigma of his birth. When that environment became intolerable he went to sea: and there under a brutal mate had only kicks and cuffs for his portion. But at last in the city of New Orleans he found a Mr. Stanley, a childless man, who took him as his own son, who gave him that love and trust for which his soul was famished, and who made a man of him just by seeing his latent manliness and appealing to it. Over in Denmark even the poorest of the people manage to have flowers all winter, spite of the scant sunlight and the long season of bitter cold. They raise them in window gardens, and they call them, by contrast with the easily grown flowers of summer,

"loved-up flowers." In no other way could they have been grown. May we not say with absolute truthfulness that every flower that blooms in a personality is a loved-up flower? Not one of us is self-made. Far from it. It was the trust that was reposed in us that made us.

Is it not a wonderful thought that we can be of great help to God in His tremendous task of remaking men? We can do it by believing all things good of them, as He does. That chiefly is what it means to be laborers together with God. We are prone to think it means strain and sweat and agony. No, no! it means for us to trust people as He does.

III. The next of Love's Urbanities to be mentioned is its OPTIMISM: it "hopeth all things." That we keep hopeful is quite as important as that we keep trustful. We hear a great deal said these days about the demand for young men. It is pronounced thoroughly irrational and indefensible. Allow me to say that we do not state the case correctly. It is not so much a demand for

young men as for unspoiled men: for such as have still the qualities of trustfulness and hopefulness. If old men can manage to keep these qualities, the world will have a place for them. They will be young old men: perennially young. But it is not an easy task to keep these traits, especially one's hopefulness. One does not have to live to a great age to have many disappointments. Nor can he advance far in life without noting how very slowly reforms move and how many of them die out before any radical improvement has been accomplished. Unless one sets a watch upon his heart he will be saying by and by, with a sigh that is the first symptom of supineness, "What has been must still be; and it is vain to expect anything new under the sun." There is just one antidote for this creeping paralysis of a soul, and that is none other than love. Let a man love his fellow-men as he ought, and he will be found saying, "This wrong can be ended, because it ought to be ended." Let him love God as he ought, and he will come back after every reverse to the solilo-

quy, "Because we have justice on our side, we have also the God of justice; and we can not fail." This is the kind of love that hopeth all things.

There is a remarkable book entitled "A Ten Years' War." It tells the story of the long fight which ended in the destruction of Mulberry Bend in New York City. Its author, in the performance of his work as a reporter, found what a pesthole for disease and what a nursery for crime that frightfully overcrowded section was. He was a true Abou ben Adhem, if love for one's fellow-men proves him to be of that lineage. It went to his heart to see babies by the score dying in Mulberry Bend because of the foul air they breathed, the anæmic mothers from whom they drew their sustenance, and the filth everywhere. He could scarcely sleep for thinking of the young innocence growing up to certain pollution in that unwholesome moral atmosphere. And as he mused the fire burned within him, until he registered a vow that Mulberry Bend should disappear, and that where it had been

there should be a park and a playground. His next ten years might be called an exhibit of the hopefulness of love: its indomitable hopefulness. At first everything seemed to be against him. The landlords, of course, were, for they were getting twenty-five per cent from those rotten rookeries. The politicians would not help him, for nobody was demanding it as yet: voters have to press a matter before they can be made to listen. The millions would not help him, for they did not know the facts, and consequently were not aroused. He set out to get the facts before them; and in doing so exemplified the broadening effects of a great love. It soon made of the erstwhile reporter a lecturer, and one of the most cogent in America. It brought him into acquaintanceship with the finest spirits on Manhattan: such as Lowell and Gilder. It made a psychologist of him, and he discovered that he could make a deeper impression with pictures of squalor than with descriptions of it. Without dreaming of such an outcome, he became an expert with

the camera and the stereopticon. Just when he came to regret daily the fact that the camera would not show dark, reeking hallways, nor the night scenes when the Bend swarmed with lodgers, fifteen or twenty to the room, he chanced upon a four-line item in an out-of-the-way corner of his paper, stating that a process of taking pictures by flashlight had been discovered in Germany. The next steamer that sailed carried a hurry order for such an outfit, and his hopefulness took a fresh lease on life, now that Providence had sent him such an unexpected ally. At last he got from Albany the legislation which authorized the demolition of the Bend; but such was the apathy of the city administration upon the subject that six long years passed before the ramshackle tenements came down, and everybody had ceased to hope they ever would except the man who had won for himself the nickname of "the Mulberry Bend crank." He was sustained by a vision of shade trees, and greensward, and shining stretches of water, and troops of happy, healthy children at

play; and that kept him buoyant. He had the love that hopeth all things. Even after the hideous dwellings of the Bend were torn down the authorities had not enough interest in the matter to go farther. They allowed those acres to lie, a wilderness of rubbish and a catch-all for empty tins and ash-heaps and festering garbage. And at last the one man who really cared had to go into court and bring suit against the city for maintaining a nuisance. O, we need a love for humanity such as he had, to save us from becoming pessimists: a love unhasting, unresting, unswerving; a love that apprehends God so clearly it shall know no such word as fail; a love that sings in the darkest hour:

> "But right is right, since God is God;
> And right the day must win.
> To doubt would be disloyalty;
> To falter would be sin."

IV. The last Urbanity of Love to be mentioned is its STEADFASTNESS: "Love endureth all things." The notes tell us that these words mean, Love stands its ground through all things. It is incorrigibly per-

sistent. Paul did not speak without knowledge. He was surcharged with the very kind of love he was describing: a love that nothing could deflect or dismay. Once after he had spoken to the rough mountaineers of Lycaonia, those children of nature showed how easy it is for men to go from one extreme to the other. At first they were determined to worship Paul and Silas as gods. When that was vetoed, they turned upon them with the other horn of the dilemma, and reasoning that if not gods they must be fakirs, they stoned them till all the life seemed out of them. Was such treatment more than Paul's love could stand: was it the signal for him to retire from the gospel ministry? By no means. All he did was to change his field, but not his labors of love. The very next day he was still preaching in a city adjacent. Once a year we read that the survivors of the *Sultana* have met for their annual reunion. Beyond what their years or their wounds would account for, they are broken. Those awful hours they spent in the icy waters of the Mississippi did

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the business for them. The experience robbed them of their physical resiliency and left them an entail of weakness and disease. Remembering from that instance what it means to be shipwrecked, we listen to Paul and hear him say, "Thrice I suffered shipwreck: a night and a day have I been in the deep." But not even three such experiences were enough to make him desist from the work to which his love of Christ constrained him. We read with shudders of the scourgings of ancient days: punishments which brought on what the surgeons call "shock," the same as some dread accident; punishments which ordinarily left a man broken in spirit and health for the rest of his life. And then, when we have learned how awful the scourge was, we listen to Paul and hear him say: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods:" the Roman lictor's rods—a punishment still more frightful. Did he interpret all that as a permit to desist? Emphatically No! Rather he exulted in that he was counted worthy to suffer with Christ,

and the net result of each persecution was to make him press the battle all the more energetically.

That is the Steadfastness of Love in its *heroic* form. I need not carry you back so far, nor in any direction far, to show you that steadfastness in its *clinging* form. We sing, "O Love, that will not let me go!"—meaning the Divine Love. Blessed be God, there is a great deal of that kind of love below the skies as well as above: the love that will not let men go, however wayward and wilful their course for the time being may seem. If continual dropping of water will wear away granite, the continual outpouring of love at last will soften and subdue stubborn hearts, and will infuse strength into weak natures. When Jesus said to poor, inconstant Simon, "Thou shalt be a rock," it was as though He said, "I know it; for I am going to keep on loving you until I love you into a rocklike man."

That is necessarily a slow process. I go into a petrified forest out in the Far West. I retrace its history. Those huge tree-

trunks, now solid agate of indescribable beauty, once stood erect in a green forest. Some cataclysm dammed the canyon below them, and gradually a lake arose and engulfed them: a lake whose waters were strongly impregnated with minerals. By and by the trees began to decay, but by some subtle osmose, wherever an atom of perishable wood broke down an atom of imperishable rock stole in to replace it; and slowly, slowly, the tree took on eternal quality and eternal beauty. Is it not thus that weak natures are transformed into strong? We must keep them enveloped in an environment of unwearied love. It must be a love that will not let them go. And erelong the infiltration will begin. They will begin to share our wishes. They will begin to pray, "O that the man may arise in me: that the man I am may cease to be!" And the change will be immeasurably hastened some day when they awake to see that Christ loves them with a warmth and constancy as far surpassing ours as Cotopaxi surpasses its foothills.

III.

FACTORS IN MORAL VICTORIES.

"For that the leaders took the lead in Israel, for that the people offered themselves willingly, bless ye the Lord!" JUDGES 5: 2.

These words were uttered by Deborah, the Joan of Arc of ancient Israel. The Lord had just made her glad according to the years wherein she had seen evil. For two decades she had seen, with mingled shame and impatience, her people ground under the iron heel of the Canaanite. Servitude such as this would in any country touch the patriotism of the citizen: in a theocracy it touched his religion as well. That person would feel the disgrace most keenly in whom love of God and of country was strongest.

In this case it was a woman. This need not surprise us, however, for history abounds with similar instances. Greater than the patriotism of the Spartan youth who went out

to fight his country's battles was the patriotism of his mother, who bound the shield upon his arm and with choking utterance bade him return "with it or on it;" with it as a memento, bearing the dints and bruises of many a fray; or on it as a litter, bearing his lifeless body. Loftier than the heroism of the defenders of Carthage was the heroism of their wives and sisters, who cut their long tresses and wove them into bowstrings as the need arose. Molly Stark and Barbara Frietchie were names to conjure with during the birth and the new-birth of our country's freedom. Luther drew courage and inspiration from this Katie; the Wesleys from their remarkable mother; and recusant Philip Embury was goaded back into the line of duty by the reproaches of Barbara Heck. Worthy forerunner of all these was Deborah, the Israelitish prophetess.

While she mused over her country's wrongs the fire kindled. She did not allow her zeal to unsex her, however. She neither repined over woman's frailty, nor leveled abuse at the tyranny of custom that had

closed certain avenues to her, nor styled woman a slave and man a despot. Better still, she made no attempt to ignore nature and custom alike, evolving that crowning monstrosity—a mannish woman. With eminent good sense and womanliness, rather, she set about a search for the fittest man in all the land for this masculine job of raising an army and expelling the oppressor. When she found him in the person of Barak, she neither patronized nor hectored him, and she assumed not the rôle of commander, but of counsellor.

When at last victory was theirs, she took care that its celebration should be beautiful, when it might easily have been disgraceful. Instead of permitting the very natural exultation of the people to find vent in an orgy, she turned it into the channel of thanksgiving.

The pæan which she composed on that occasion has come down to us. Why has it lived when so much else has died? Some poems are deathless because they give expression to a universal sentiment; others be-

cause they answer an ever-recurring question. This commemoration ode was of the latter description. The question it answered when it was first written was simple. A great victory had just been won. Conditions of twenty years' standing had been reversed in a single day. In modern parlance, "there had been a landslide." It seemed too good to be true. Everybody was wondering how it happened. Deborah did for them what the newspapers attempt to do for us the morning after a victory: she explained how it happened. "For that the leaders took the lead in Israel, for that the people offered themselves willingly, bless ye the Lord!" It was tantamount to saying, "If you render thanks to Almighty God for these two things, you will go right to the root of the matter."

Now history repeats itself. "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and He sold them into the hands of the Canaanite, and twenty years he mightily oppressed them"—that is ancient history. But with slight variations the same language

will serve to describe certain conditions today. The reputable citizens of a community give themselves up wholly to the pursuit of fortune; and the Lord sells that city into the hands of a ring. The moral classes of a State sit supinely by, while innocent-looking bills for "improving the breed of horses," or for "regulating athletic clubs," are being lobbied through the Legislature: and too late awake to find their fair State become a paradise for gamblers and prize-fighters. The temperance people in a spasm of virtuous energy throw up some fresh fortification about the home; but the liquor hosts simply wait, and ordinarily do not have to wait long, till the garrison falls asleep again, and then leap over the new-made barriers.

O how the shame of it, to say nothing of the danger, comes home to us at times! We should be less than patriots if we did not writhe under the impeachment that American municipal misrule is a hissing and a byword among the nations. We should be less than Christians if we were not humbled to the dust by the assertion so current in our

time, that the saloon is a more potent factor in political life than the Church. Friends, the Canaanites are quartered on us. Their name is Legion; their god, Mammon; their hope, our inertia. There is but one way to repel these spoilers of all we hold dear: when our leaders really take the lead, and when our people offer themselves willingly, then we shall have moral victories to celebrate as signal as that which furnished Deborah with a theme.

I. Discerning then in our text an enumeration of the factors requisite for any great moral victory, the order of their mention is significant. LEADERSHIP is mentioned first, as being of primary importance. This fact is ordinarily conceded. It crops out of our unstudied language. We speak of the battles won by a Grant, a business built up by a Carnegie, the isthmian achievements of a Goethals, and the converts won by a Moody. Occasionally, however, a protest is entered against this alleged injustice. Too little credit is given to the private, we are told: too much to the commanding gen-

eral. The evangelist gets all the credit for the converts gained: his corps of workers goes unsung. I mention this sensitiveness, amounting in some instances to acrimony, only to deplore it. This pitting of the left hand against the right is miserable business, and he will have much to answer who lends himself to it. Already it has worked incalculable mischief in the industrial world, by arraying the men against the management. Who has not heard from labor some such plaint as this: "We create or augment values by our labor, while the so-called manager sits in his office, supposedly running a business that has reached a point where it will almost run itself; but when it comes to a division of the profits, the lion's share goes to him!" With this mistaken notion of management, captains of industry are roundly denounced as parasites, if not robbers. The next step is not a long one. Let workingmen once convince themselves that managers are useless or worse, and the logical sequel must be a movement to dispense with managers altogether. Co-operation is heralded

as a panacea for all industrial ills. But the history of co-operative experiments—and there have been not a few of them—has not been reassuring. It is for the most part a history of failure. The comparatively few ventures that have proved successful have been those that early were entrusted to the management of an executive committee, of about the size of an average modern business firm. They succeeded only because they dropped their theory and made a tacit acknowledgment of the necessity of specialized leadership.

The Society of Friends was the outcome of a similar agitation in ecclesiastical circles. They served notice at the outset that they would tolerate no leaders, episcopal or pastoral. The result has been disappointing. Looking at their character, we should expect that the world would by this time be full of them; for the Quaker type is one of singular beauty and attractiveness. But looking at their nerveless, acephalous polity, we can not wonder that they have remained a feeble folk. Propagandism is excessively difficult

without strong, centralized leadership. It is significant that those bodies that have astonished the modern world by the rapidity of their growth have been lavish of leaders. The goal toward which we are moving in our evolution is not some sort of co-operative polity. Even the section gang on the railway must have some one of their number to give orders: to tell them when to lift and when to throw the heavy rails. And the more complex the form of concerted effort, the more indispensable does leadership become.

Broadly speaking, the world has not had too many, but too few leaders. There are times when it seems to us that it has no real leaders, no matter how many nominal ones may be in sight, and we join with Tennyson in a fervent prayer for

> "One still, strong man in a blatant land.
> Whatever you call him, what care I?
> Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
> Who can rule, and dare not lie."

For the lack of such a man in 1793, the French Revolution degenerated into a Reign

of Terror. For the lack of such a man to follow Luther, Europe was plunged into the Thirty Years' War, and half the ground won for Protestantism in Germany was lost. Yes, and for the lack of such a man in many an American city and town to-day, the moral forces are disorganized and prostrate before a united and exultant opposition. O there are still spots on which the Savior looks down with infinite compassion, because He sees His "people scattered like sheep without a shepherd."

This is not always for the reason that the material out of which leaders might be made is wanting. More often it is because God has called and no man has regarded. Abdicated leadership is one of the most disheartening signs of the times. The Pulpit can not be wholly exculpated at this point. It has suffered immeasurable loss of influence through certain of its representatives, who, from fear of dealing with live questions, because forsooth they are likewise delicate ones, have degenerated into amiable nobodies and retailers of inoffensive commonplaces.

The Press is also guilty. Its aim in our day is less to mold public sentiment than to earn dividends. It is selling for a mess of pottage its birthright to be a mentor; and is fast becoming a mere flippant chronicler of everything, good, bad, and indifferent: especially the bad and the indifferent. Leading citizens are guilty. In Church-work and reforms it happens with sad frequency that the really efficient people are not active, and those who are active are not as efficient as the situation calls for. Those who ought to lead will not, and those who try to can not. In one sense these naturally capable people who hold aloof do lead still; but it is in the wrong direction. I am speaking at this very moment to some persons who are known as leading citizens in this community and as leading members of this Church. The characterization thus given you is no misnomer, but an inevitable fact. Leaders you are and will be, whether you relish it or not. You are bound to be followed: followed in the direction of worldliness, of selfish ease, and of civic dereliction, if that is your bent; or

followed in the direction of consecration and piety, if those are your distinctive marks. Well might Deborah call upon her people to bless the Lord because their leaders really took the lead in right directions. No greater cause for thankfulness can be given any Church or community.

II. But we must not allow a consideration of the importance of leadership to crowd out all thought of the necessity of CO-OPERATION on the part of the people. This is the second great factor in every moral victory. "For that the people offered themselves willingly, bless ye the Lord."

Carlyle, in his essay on Burns, remarks that it is only once or twice in a century that a towering genius is given us; and then the people are blind to his merits. A similar thought might be formulated regarding the man pre-eminently endowed with the qualities of leadership. He is but seldom sent to us, and then we almost break his mighty heart by our inadequate and listless support. The Father of our Country must

lose the first half of each year imploring for an army, and then have the unutterable vexation of seeing it melt away by expiration of enlistment just when the time is ripe for some master-stroke. We thrust upon our loftiest patriot the awful task of preserving a menaced Union, and then, early in the struggle, cease to offer men for his armies, and compel him to resort with wrung and anguished heart to the draft. And so it has ever been. Moses deliberately refuses the crown of Egypt and the pleasures of an opulent court, to cast in his lot with his enslaved kindred; but they denounce and threaten to desert him no less than ten times as he leads them to liberty. The Great Apostle endures countless perils by land and sea that he may carry the Glad Tidings to the unevangelized: only to discover at length that the more abundantly he loves certain of his Churches, the less he is loved by them. Indeed, it was this unrequited love that made Jesus the Man of Sorrows. He was as "one from whom men

hide their face." "He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him."

As Deborah in our text accounts for victory, so later in the ode she accounts for the delinquencies which detracted somewhat from the nation's exultation. The delinquents were three tribes, and an isolated city in a fourth. The tribes were Reuben, Dan, and Asher: the city, Meroz.

The tribes under a cloud illustrated the proverbial timidity of Capital in the presence of a great call of duty. Let Reuben serve for an instance. He had abundance of flocks and herds, but not of backbone. What he had gained of the stuff that goes to make affluence, had been at the expense of the stuff that makes manliness. If he should turn out against these Canaanites, and get whipped, his flocks would pay for it. He thought of that, and to save his sheep sacrificed his patriotism.

To be sure, when the trumpet came echoing from hilltop to hilltop, his heart too swelled with high resolve. But he never got

any farther than resolving. On second thought he seems to have given up his martial designs, as involving too many risks to his property. Something happened later to make him re-resolve, but that again was like the morning dew. If it be the mark of a poet to be "dowered with the scorn of scorn," Deborah's title is clear. Her fine sarcasm in flaying Reuben is positively exhilarating. She uses antithesis with tremendous force: "Zebulon was a people that *jeoparded their lives* unto the death. By the watercourses of Reuben there were great *resolves!*" Between the lines we can hear her saying, "A fig for such resolves! Spite of them all he sat among his sheepfolds and let others save his country for him." And Dan with his shipping interests, and Asher with his docks and warehouses did no better: she pays her respects to them also. Were she living today, she would find Reubens, Dans, and Ashers in our modern business life, capable of acting in the same inglorious fashion. They would still be found begging off somewhat on this wise: "Do n't ask me to take

any very prominent part in this movement. I do n't care to get people down on me. If I were to get out and work, it would only make me a lot of enemies and drive away their patronage. Of course I am boundlessly interested in your cause; I consider it a mighty good one and wish you every success in it: I am even willing to give you something handsome for its funds provided you will agree to report it as 'Cash,' or 'From a Friend,' or in some other noncommittal way; but farther than that I can not go." O for the muse of Deborah! to excoriate as it deserves the moral cowardice of much of our modern commercialism.

Another reason for the inertia of Reuben is hinted at. His was the shepherd's vocation: in other words, one peculiarly favorable to the formation of the reflective habit. Where that habit does its best for a man, it makes him capable of such lofty musings as are found in the Shepherd Psalm; but where it does its worst, it makes him cautious when he should be bold; undecided, when he ought to act. It would seem to

have been so with Reuben. Deborah tells how other tribes rushed down to the valley of battle; and adds (her contempt softening into pity), "By the watercourses of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." Elsewhere, *mobilization;* with him, *cogitation.* Poor Reuben! his first impulses were his best ones; but while others were acting on theirs, he, unstable as water, must be still searching his in an agony of indecision, uncertain whether they were sound or not. True, they convinced him yesterday: in fact did it a little too well. To-day his blood is cooled and he is positive no case is ever quite as clear as this one looked yesterday. He must search into it a little further: with the result that by the time his searching was done the battle was over.

A third cause of Reuben's ignominy was his rooted conservatism. He was the Tory country gentleman of the period. To shame him, Deborah asks, "Why satest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the pipings for the flocks?" Ah, that was just it. He was happy in his daily routine: why not let well

enough alone? He liked to have one day just like another. If he should go over to the vale of Esdraelon to fight, he would be miserable all the time for fear the sheep would not be folded at night the way he was accustomed to do it; or let out in the morning at the proper time. Others might fancy the reveille if they chose; but as for him, all the music he cared for was the pipings for the flocks. He was too old now to make any violent changes in his daily course of life. Have you not known before now some woman of ample fortune, who in an evil hour purchased a half-dozen old hens, and ever afterwards was anchored to that hen-coop? Suggest travel to her! She could not think of it: who would look after her chickens while she was away? Even a long summer evening's drive was not to be thought of: thieves might come while the place was deserted, and carry off her feathered treasures. It is a worse thing, however, when one sets up a sort of intellectual hen-coop, with a few antiquated notions in it which he makes it his business in

life to protect and coddle. Your simon-pure Conservative is afraid to look squarely at anything new for fear he may have to give up something old. He has gotten himself nicely adjusted to things just as they are, and considers it unfeeling in you to try to get him out of his rut, or to turn things topsy turvy. If in Reuben's case the conservatism of a De Coverly, the indecision of a Hamlet, and the timidity of a Dives met, small wonder that heaven and earth could not move him!

The case with Meroz seems to have been different. All we know with certainty about the place is that it was almost on the perilous edge of the battlefield, and yet the people in it came not up to the help of the Lord. But really that is all we care to know: it is enough to classify them. The important point is that the inhabitants of Meroz could not be depended on for *heroism at short range.* There was no glamour about it: rough-and-tumble business, rather. For that they had no particular relish. A person who is of the lineage of Meroz—and the

type is a most persistent one—waxes righteously indignant over the opium curse in China and England's complicity with it, but parts company with you when you propose a crusade to end the liquor curse in America, and governmental complicity with it. His blood boils with indignation over the horrors of slave-catching in Africa, and over the quasi-slavery of the rubber regions of South America; but when you summon him to help extirpate white slavery in America, he answers with the double-distilled apathy of pessimism, "The social evil is an ancient and inveterate institution: it never has been stamped out, and it never can be." The words have not left his lips before you know that you will get no assistance from him.

So far as results go, it matters little whether the apathy of the people is to be likened to that of Reuben or to that of Meroz. In either case, if general, it will effectually stop the Lord's work. There were places where the Almighty Son of God Himself could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. You may have

seen some time a man of undimmed intellect paralyzed in all his limbs. His will might still command, but his members would no longer respond, and he was perforce reduced to the helplessness of a babe. In the same way we may limit the Holy One. He is the Head of the Church: we are the members. He must have our aid, or He can not carry out His great designs. It was therefore no mere corybantic frenzy that prompted Deborah to invoke a bitter curse upon the inhabitants of Meroz who came not up to the help of the Lord. If all the people had been as indifferent as they, Barak, splendid leader though he was, would have been absolutely handicapped. It is just here that many a reform movement fails. A multitude of citizens are quick to write the leader, assuring him of their sympathy and prayers: some of them even think to enclose a check for the sinews of war. But the real test of their love for morality and good government comes when they are asked to circulate petitions and go through nasty weather to the polls, or at cost of personal sacrifice to

serve on juries or to take office under the new régime. Then, alas, it is too often found that the very people who were willing to offer their prayers or their money *are not willing to offer themselves:* and the movement that began in promise ends in a fiasco.

It is one of the providences of Church-life that so many members find themselves alternately or even simultaneously in the positions of leaders and supporters. In the position of leaders we are made to feel the value of good backing; in the ranks we are made to feel the value of good leadership. We discover that so far as happiness is concerned it makes little difference in which position we are, provided we are where God wants us to be. We are like the great orchestra: some members playing major parts, some minor; but all with our eyes upon the score-book of the Great Master, and all striving to fill the world with the harmonies of His love.

IV.

LEAF-LANGUAGE.

"*And we all do fade as a leaf.*" Isa. 64: 6.

Every part of God's handiwork is so marvelous that it does not greatly matter what object we choose for special study. Whatever it may be, it will prove unexpectedly interesting and instructive. The great Agassiz taught this truth impressively to a summer school which he held near the end of his life. His pupils were teachers: many of them gathered from across the continent, and all of them desirous of reaping the largest returns from their outlay of time and money. The first day he had an assistant give each of them a grasshopper; and having requested them to study it until the same hour the next day, he dismissed them. When they came together again, and reported all they had found about their grass-

hopper, he kindly reproached them in his quaint Swiss accents for having found so little. Again he gave to each a fresh grasshopper and dismissed them to study it; and this was repeated each day to the close of the session. By that time his pupils had discovered that there was enough in the simple grasshopper to reward painstaking study for a month; and also that in thus studying one of God's creatures, the habit of patient investigation was being formed, which if brought to bear upon any other object, would show it likewise to be wonderfully instructive.

Instructive, I say deliberately. The Great Teacher drew many of His ethical lessons from nature. Nor were His parables far-fetched. The One Life-giver has imparted a certain oneness to all life. Plant-life, for instance, illustrates human life. We must be pardoned for pitying any one who can truthfully say,

> "A primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose is to him,
> And it is nothing more."

That man has certainly more of the mind of Christ

"To whom the meanest flower that blows,
Can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

There are sermons in leaves. They are wonderfully like men: and that not alone in their fading days, but at every stage. We are now bidding a reluctant farewell to them; and it is a fitting time to recall their message to us.

I. To begin with: the leaf is NOT ALONE. It has relations with the tree or plant that gave it birth, and also with the whole complex system of Nature. These relations are partly of *dependence,* partly of *obligation.* It is dependent upon its parent stock for sap and support, and upon Nature at large for sunshine and moisture, not to mention many other things. In its turn it has obligations: functions to perform. To the trunk or stalk on which it grows it is a lung; to the ground that nourishes it, a parasol. In nature at large the leaf is a health-officer, extracting the poisonous car-

bonic acid gas from the air and augmenting its supply of life-giving oxygen. And not only so, but it is also comptroller of the earth's water supply, retarding the escape of the rainfall and conserving the moisture of the soil: thus constituting it our greatest, though hitherto undervalued, safeguard against floods and drouths. And last but not least, leaves have a ministry to render to man's soul-life. They fill his eyes with a beauty at once exquisite and refreshing, his ears with music that runs the whole gamut of feeling, from the laughing rustle to the sighing murmur, and his soul with awe and reverence.

"The groves were God's first temples: for man's simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray, old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty."

LEAF-LANGUAGE.

In not being alone, man is like the leaf. He too has relations to the stock that bore him, and indeed to all creation: relations these, likewise, of dependence and obligation. To his ancestry he is indebted for his physical basis and mental bias: there being great truth in Holmes's remark that a child's training begins six hundred years before it is born. To society each individual is indebted for security of person and property. To the world of yesterday he is indebted for the ideas and discoveries that make up his mental furniture; to the world of to-day for many of his highest incentives and inspirations. It is an egregious misuse of language to call anybody a self-made man.

Nor is it alone to humanity that the individual is indebted in ways far more than have been enumerated: he is also a retainer and pensioner upon the bounties of nature. The forest, the field, or the mine furnish him his stuff to work on; the sun in the heavens directly or indirectly furnishes him his power to work with; the "brave, over-

hanging firmament," the snow-capped sierra, and the limitless ocean introduce him to sublimity, and through that, to divinity. Well may every person echo the words of Childe Harold,

> "I live not in myself, but I become
> Portion of that around me."

Now, this relation of dependence, whether upon man or nature, carries with it the relation of obligation. Freely we have received: freely we are to give. Do we receive from the State security of person and property: then the very least we can do is to bear our share of the burden of maintaining the State. The citizen who will resort to every conceivable expedient and subterfuge to escape jury duty; or who must be coaxed or hired to go to the polls; or who makes a false return of his taxable or dutiable property, is an ingrate, and as such should be held up to the obloquy of the world. We think decidedly too much about what we are to receive from society: too little about what we are in duty bound to give. It was perhaps

inevitable while our liberties were being won, that men should give their largest thought to their rights; but now that those same rights have been secured, it is henceforth incumbent upon every true patriot to call men back to a realization of their duties. We are moving towards a more righteous future in which it will be looked upon as axiomatic that every man by reason of what he receives from society must make some productive return to society, either in the toil of hand or brain. "The idle dreamer of an empty day" is coming to be stigmatized as a sponge. The gambler, who develops none of the world's resources and who neither creates nor augments values, will not much longer receive the euphonious title of speculator or sport, but the more fitting name of parasite. The multimillionaire of to-morrow who does not make lavish benefactions to educational and philanthropic enterprises will fill a dishonored grave. Already the signs of the times point to this. The rising sense of civic and social responsibility is one of the most cheering aspects of our age.

And we are also coming to see that our responsibility does not end with human society, but reaches out to the great system of nature as well. Darwin has somewhat facetiously illustrated this truth in his work On the Origin of Species. He there pictures a farmer's son, not yet emerged from the semi-savagery of youth during which it seems to afford pleasure to inflict pain, killing off all the birds of the place. The fieldmice, thus ridden of their natural foes, multiplied enormously and looted every adjacent bumble-bee's nest of its provident store of honey. In consequence the bees died of starvation during the long winter; and when Spring again came, and every clover field burst abloom, there were no bees to carry pollen about on their furry coats and fertilize the flowers. Last of all, the farmer got a short crop of clover seed because of the savagery of his son a twelvemonth previously. In more serious mood Longfellow sings of a town-meeting at Killingworth, where the voters, instigated by the surrounding farmers, offered a

bounty for the heads of slaughtered crows; and did it only too successfully, for the summer following

> "Devoured by worms like Herod was the town,
> Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
> Slaughtered the innocents."

Already we are told on unimpeachable authority that certain large regions of earth's surface are being irremediably blighted by insect pests, because annually from those same regions plumage birds by the thousand are slaughtered and deported to the millinery shops of the world's capitals.

Another, slightly different but sternly real, disturbance of Nature's equilibrium by the hand of man is deserving of mention. The mountains at our rivers' heads are being rapidly denuded of their forests through the cupidity of lumbermen, and we pay the penalty for it in February floods and October water-famines.

Yes, man is like the leaf in that he is part of a vast and complex system in nature. One of the evidences he can give that he

is a child of the Preserver of the Universe is in being himself a preserver of it in so far as opportunity is afforded him.

II. In the second place leaves have infinite VARIETY AND ADAPTATION. Endless variety in shape — sword-shaped, shield-shaped, lance-shaped, heart-shaped, kidney-shaped, egg-shaped: shapes of every sort, and in such numbers that the memory staggers in the attempt to carry them. Endless variety also in size, from the needle of the pine at one extreme to a veritable coverlet of green at the other. Endless variety in skeleton, in texture, in shadings. Endless variety in groupings: here independent each; there, encircling the stalk in a whorl; and yonder, associated in a feathery frond.

And in all this variety there is adaptation. The leaf has its own special form, because in that form it can best accommodate itself to its surroundings and serve its generation. See the thick, fleshy leaves of the cactus. Its habitat is arid, and these leaves are cisterns in which water is stored during rains, to be dealt out during drouths. See that mam-

moth plantain leaf. Its habitat is under a vertical sun; and that great area of leaf serves the double purpose of shading the earth about the roots to keep it from parching, and also of presenting an extensive surface for the collection of dew. Or see this saucer-shaped leaf encircling the stalk, and seldom empty of water. The dead insects in it reveal its purpose. Miss Blossom up at the top is as secure as was Mariana "in her moated grange," for every pillager that attempts to climb to her is doomed to drowning.

Now, in the human race we find plenty of variety also: variety in age—childhood, youth, maturity, and senility; variety in temperament, in talents, in aptitudes. As many men, so many minds. And in all this human variety there is wonderful adaptation. We may not always be able to see it at first glance; but it is there nevertheless, and God understands.

Babyhood may have impressed us as being a mistake in nature. Why can not the little child mature in a single day, and enter

at once upon its lifework, as so many other creatures do! But if we so reason, how foolish we are! God knows best. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained strength. "In the creation of mammalia," as Professor Drummond well says, "He established two schools in the world—the two oldest, surest, and best equipped schools of ethics that have ever been—the one for the child, who must now at least know the Mother; the other for the Mother, who must as certainly attend her child. It may be that a Mother teaches a child; but in a far deeper sense it is the child who teaches the Mother. Patience, Carefulness, Tenderness, Sympathy, and Self-sacrifice are either born or matured over the cradle." To make this admirable statement of Professor Drummond complete, it ought to be added that the child's influence upon man is but slightly less potent than that which it exercises upon woman. When Bret Harte pictures to us how the advent of a little child into a rough mining-camp led to a complete transformation of it, an inner

conviction born of personal experiences tells us that he has not exceeded the bounds of credibility. If we ourselves were asked how we came into some of our most treasured religious experiences, we should have to reply that a little child led us into them.

Or turn to Womanhood for another evidence of this fine adaptation. It is the pastime of cheap wit to gird at woman's reasons, woman's tears, and woman's credulity. It is the hope of certain of our strong-minded sisters, who have well-nigh unsexed themselves, that the process may become general and a New Woman be evolved who shall be exempt from all these antiquated womanish weaknesses. May the good God avert it! Did we but see it, these very qualities are what fit her to be a helpmate to the husband, a mother to the child, and a queen in the home. What if she does sometimes reach her conclusions in a way neither she nor anybody else can comprehend: her intuitions are just as trustworthy as man's logic. It is as if he reaches his result by adding up, and she by adding down the column. Very well:

her difference of method fits her the better to be his counselor. What if she does invest the man she loves with certain virtues to which he is a stranger: her very trust inspires in him a purpose to really be all that she believes him to be. Take man out of the sphere of woman's influence: as in the university, which until quite recently in the world's history has been "a male zenana," or as in the military cantonment, or even as in the monastery, and you will very quickly discern in him an appreciable loss of refinement if not also a marked moral deterioration. As an acute writer has remarked, "Men have the making of civilization, but women have the making of men. Practically and to a large extent they settle what subjects shall be spoken of, and in what tone, trifling or serious." We would not have woman different if we could; we devoutly thank God that those who would have her different have a scant following to-day, and are likely to have less to-morrow;

"For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse; could we make her as the man,

Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is this:
Not like to like, but like in difference."

It would not become me to speak at length upon the adaptation of Manhood for a large and very indispensable part of the world's work. Suffice it to say that, though his fiber is coarser than woman's, and his ways more brusque and assertive, he is by so much the better fitted for his allotted task of bread-winner for the home and actor upon the public stage.

Before we pass from this thought that as among leaves, so among men there are endless variations, and in these varieties adaptations, let us look at another phase of it. There are different aptitudes found even in the same sex. One boy, for instance, has mechanical genius, another mathematical, another artistic. I have a conviction that if man did not interfere with God's plans, as many persons with aptitudes for a given kind of work would find their way into that occupation as it demands, and no occupation would be overcrowded: "to every man his work." Where war has not de-

pleted the number of men, nor emigration drained them off—that is to say, where society is normal—it is found that there are just about as many men who might be husbands as there are women who might be wives. God in some mysterious way preserves this balance of the sexes and provides for the home. Just so we feel warranted in believing that if society were normal and not artificial, as many honest and capable domestics would be available as our homes call for: as many young men would study law or medicine or divinity as are needed, and no more. But a miserable caste spirit comes in and disarranges everything: the caste of occupation. Boys who love tools and would make first-rate mechanics are trained into third-rate doctors, lawyers, or preachers: because forsooth these are known as the learned professions, and professional life is considered in good form. It was heralded the length and breadth of this country as a most extraordinary thing when a son of James G. Blaine announced his intention of becoming a locomotive engineer. But

why should he not, if he loved that work? To veto a boy's entrance into some manual pursuit for which he has a liking and aptitudes, and to force him into some other calling for which he has neither liking nor aptitudes, is to make him relatively unhappy and unsuccessful through life. We study soils, and then put them to raising the crops they are best adapted for. If we showed a like regard for predilections and aptitudes in the choice of a life career, the productiveness and, what is of more consequence, the happiness of mankind would be immeasurably increased.

This adaptation for special work is not confined to individuals: it manifests itself in races as well. The Hebrew mind was preeminently religious, and God used it as a channel for the revelation of His will. The Greek mind was subtile and esthetic, and God used it to develop an incomparable language, in which His gospel might without impairment be transmitted to the world. The Roman mind was systematic, and God used it to work out our creedal statements.

The Anglo-Saxon mind is altruistic, and to-day God is using it as His great propagandist to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth. To every man his work: to every people its work.

III. Having now noticed the remoter analogies between man and the leaf, it remains to take up the one specifically mentioned: "We all do fade as a leaf." Surely, with Autumnal glories all about us, we can not consider this a doleful thought. The leaf is never quite so lovely as in its fading days. The gorgeous beauty of our forests in Autumn is the despair alike of the man who paints with colors and of the man who paints with words.

Is there not something answering to this in the OLD AGE of a saint? Ah, what lessons of saintliness we have gathered from those whose way of life had fallen into the sere and yellow leaf! How much of hope they have infused into us! They probably had at first such angularities to contend with as we deplore in ourselves, but the years have rubbed them all away. Their asperities have

all been mellowed down, and in their stead have come a sweet reasonableness, a large charity, and an indefinable tenderness. Then, too, what proficiency they have attained in the school of love—and life, rightly understood, is nothing else than such a school. Objects of love have multiplied for them as the years have come and gone: wife, children, grandchildren; but with the ever-increasing demand upon the affections came an ever-increasing supply of love. Even sorrow increased the quantity of it and improved the quality. Some they have loved long since are lost awhile, but the love of them remains as something sublimated, purer, holier. Every such aged friend has been to us a Rabbi ben Ezra, saying,

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be:
The last of life for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hands
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half: trust God: see all, nor be afraid.'"

The fall of a leaf is not the end of its usefulness. Every Autumn through ages

past the primeval forests of America shed their leaves; and slowly, slowly there was laid upon the clays and the rocks a surface of rich leaf-mold. What is the black, fertile earth of our valleys and prairies? Principally decayed vegetable matter: the leaves of trees and grasses. Through a long, long future a mighty nation will draw its sustenance from that stored riches.

And likewise it is true that death is not the end of usefulness for a servant of God. Temperate habits, healthy living, high ideals, and strong purposes bless not alone their possessors, but posterity as well. What Heredity does not hand down, it may be Memory will. Being dead, we shall yet speak to the world. No man is to be judged until the last day, for the good and sufficient reason that no man's grand total of influence can be footed up sooner. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: that is to say, everything that goes to make up a Christlike life is imperishable. Holy thoughts and habits and affinities live on and on. Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

V.

JUDAS: EMBEZZLER.

"And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place." ACTS 1: 24f.

As a subject of controversy the character of Judas takes rank with that of Mary, Queen of Scots. Those who have given the question much thought have divided into three classes. One of these would have us believe that Judas was a good man from first to last; another maintains that he was bad from first to last; while the residue see in him a backslider—the first in the Christian Church, and in many respects a typical one.

Those who believe that he was a good man to the end of his life have some difficult facts

to deal with, chief among which may be mentioned his betrayal of the Master, and his suicide. Their charitableness, however, is equal to the task thus put upon it. He was a *zealot,* they say, impatient for the setting up of the Messiah's Kingdom. The betrayal was no more than an attempt to force Christ's hand; and the suicide followed as a consequence of his awakening to a sense of his awful and irreparable mistake.

This view does credit to the heart of those who hold it. But while we admire optimism, whether it have to do with individuals or events, we can not forget that too great a price may be paid for it. And this is done whenever it can be secured or retained only by ignoring such statements of Scripture as can not be made to coalesce with it. We charge the apologists of Judas with having done this. The money he received from the chief priests was described by a contemporary no less well informed than Peter as "the reward of his iniquity." The apostolic company, praying for light in the choice of his successor, speak of him as one who "fell

away." John, without mincing matters, tells us that he had become a "thief." And the Living Truth showed His appraisement of him when He said, "Did not I choose you the Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" In the face of such explicit and authoritative statements as these, a belief that he was a good man to the end of his life is for us untenable.

Antipodal to this view is that which sees in him not a zealot, but a *reprobate*. This grim conception is a product of the remorseless logic of a past theological epoch, just as its opposite is a product of the easy amiability of our own. That any one could ever have forced himself to adopt it, if he had not come to the study of Judas with a preconceived theory which he was bent upon establishing, may well be doubted. This theory, as you know, is that destiny is a matter of divine decree. If this be true, there can, of course, be no miscarriage. A good man, for instance, can not end badly. If he does end badly, it is proof that he was always bad, appearances to the contrary not-

withstanding. Judas was unquestionably bad during the second and third years of our Lord's ministry: therefore, say they, he must have been bad from the outset. The treasurership did not ruin, it simply revealed him.

But in our text we find answer to this rather forbidding theory. The apostles are addressing their risen Lord in prayer, when, if ever, one's words are well weighed; and they speak of it as matter of common knowledge to both saint and Savior that Judas "fell away." If he *fell away,* he was not originally *away:* he became an apostate after he became an apostle.

To this plain statement may be added several warrantable inferences, pointing in the same direction. Think what the apostleship of Judas meant. He was a chosen intimate of Jesus: a bosom companion in fact. If a man of our acquaintance chooses for a friend a person whom we know to be bad, we conclude either that he is bad also and that the friendship is one of affinity, or else that he lacks the ability to read character and

that the friendship subsists only by virtue of his ignorance. Neither of these contingencies was possible with Jesus. The Holy One and the Just never chose a bad man as His friend by preference; and He who "needed not that any should bear witness concerning man, but Himself knew what was in man," never chose a bad man for an intimate in ignorance of his true character.

This argument becomes still stronger when we remember that Jesus chose this man for the ministry as well as for personal companionship. As clergymen we have no graver responsibility during the entire twelvemonth than when we pass upon candidates for our ministry. What Washington, in his reprimand of Arnold, said regarding the military vocation embodies more truly our conception of the ministerial. "Our profession," said he, "is the chastest of all: even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the luster of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favor, so hard to be acquired." And yet our feeling all this renders it by no means cer-

tain that we shall not let a few unworthy men get in. We can only read outward signs, and a considerable number in every large licensing or ordaining body lack even that gift. Besides we are, many of us, victims of over-emphasis: some one grace is in our way of thinking the all-important grace. If a candidate has that one qualification, it is his Open Sesame with us, regardless of the fact that he needs a galaxy of graces, and not just one. But the Savior's thoughts regarding the ministry were as high above our thoughts as the heavens are high above the earth: yes, and His ways were as high above our ways. In Him there was no place for either ignorance or prejudice. That Judas was His choice for the ministry may be taken as evidence that at that time he was worthy.

His selection as treasurer would seem to prove something more. Here was an office to be filled that would expose its holder to a certain amount of temptation. That Judas, rather than another, was chosen to fill it, would seem to indicate that at that

time he seemed the least likely to fall: that he was the most trusty of the Twelve.

This treasurership calls for further consideration, for it explains the downfall of Judas, to which we now come. Jesus and His apostles were known to have given up gainful pursuits. Loving friends accordingly supported them by voluntary contributions. This money came into the hands of the treasurer, and was expended by him as purchasing agent. It will readily be seen that here was a situation affording opportunity for petty peculations. The temptation proved too much for him. When he had held the office for about two years, the company were at supper one evening in Bethany. It was a meal the like of which has never since been seen; for there sat at table a man who two months previously had sickened, died, and had been buried; and after four days had been brought back from death and advanced dissolution by Jesus. One of his two maiden sisters was on this occasion so full of gratitude that she "took a pound of spikenard very precious, and

anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair." Judas looked on grudgingly, and when he found his voice, it was to say, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?" John, who tells the incident, adds, "Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein."

At the end of his second year, then, he was an embezzler, and so greedy that he begrudged every gift that came to Jesus in a form he could not profit by. When did he fall? The verb John uses lends some light. Its tense signifies that already his stealings were so numerous as to have become habitual: "he was accustomed to abstract what was put therein"—that is the literal force of the words.

Further investigation shows that this had been going on for more than a year, for about the end of the first year Jesus had said to the apostles, "Did not I choose you the Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" re-

ferring to Judas, as John hastens to inform us. Very significantly these words concluded a censure which Jesus was passing upon the multitudes, because they were following Him for the loaves and the fishes. Before He dismissed the subject He came closer home, and apprised the apostles that the poison had entered their own little circle, since one of their number no longer followed Him out of affection, but for pelf.

Just how much money was stolen does not greatly concern us, for we never get at the enormity of a crime by rule of thumb. If, however, we were to venture an opinion, we should have to say that, while the stealings were numerous, the total amount was probably small. It came from a people who were very poor. Some knowledge of the scarcity of money in a country can be gathered from its wage-rate: in Palestine it was a shilling a day. Something additional may be learned from the smallest coin in circulation: in Palestine it was the mite, worth a quarter of a cent. It is in evidence also that the people were taxed to the verge of penury. All this

indicates that no great sums could have come into the common purse, and out of this slim total Judas would not dare divert any large fraction to his own pocket for fear of detection. This is only to say anew that it is not the mere amount of money that ruins, but the way it is gotten and used. The chances of drowning are, of course, greater in the river than in the rivulet, but people have been known to drown in rivulets. Small as the stealings were, they were ample to give the world its most conspicuous illustration of the hardening effects of secret sin, and its swift progression.

To the consideration of these last-named aspects we now come. It will hardly be questioned that some sins are more hardening in their effects than others. The sin of Judas was peculiarly indurating. This was true in the first place because it almost instantly became a sin against sincerity. During two years of secret sin he kept his place in the ministry and apostleship. How he could enter upon such a course is made intelligible by modern instances. We will

suppose a man prominent in Church work to have taken a misstep so serious that he instantly recognizes his unfitness for continuance in Church work, if not also for continuance in Church relations. His first and best impulse is to make a clean breast of it, trusting God and man for forgiveness, and content to abide by their decision as to how much or how little Church work he shall do in the future. But a foolish pride asserts itself in his bosom, and will have none of this. Next he thinks of resigning all his offices and withdrawing from the Church, that at least he may not be in a false position. And this is really his only honorable alternative; but he soon sees that he will never be permitted to do these things without giving his reasons; and his pride, that objected to confession in the first case, finds this plan still more distasteful, as involving confession still, preceded by a scene. Now follows an agony of indecision, with Sunday and its round of duties coming on apace. If he does not decide upon something quickly, the flight of time will determine his

course for him, and that, too, in the wrong direction. This method of extrication, abhorrent to him at first because seen to be cowardly, gradually comes to be welcome, and it is with feelings akin to relief that he hears the peals of the bell Sunday morning, terminating his long and humiliating indecision. A president or governor is not the only man whose time is limited for vetoing bad measures. Henceforth insincerity is to be the law of this man's life, because he did not veto it in the time allowed.

That he is to be permanently insincere he would not, of course, admit. He flatters himself, on the contrary, that that secret sin is never to be repeated, and he proposes to be more spiritual than ever. Neither of these things will happen, however, and if they did they would never atone for an unforgiven sin. If the defaulter awaiting trial were to say to his former superiors, "I can not get the consent of my mind to restore what I misappropriated, but if you will not press this suit, and if you will be lenient enough to let me keep right on at my desk,

I promise you I will never take another penny, and I will be a veritable model of diligence"—would that make matters right? If a man has not cleaned up an ugly past, deeper spirituality in the future would never atone for it, if such spirituality were possible. It is not even possible. Shakespeare is nowhere truer to fact than where in Hamlet he pictures the king upon his knees vainly trying to pray, and saying:

"But O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul
murder?'
That can not be: since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder."

An impenitent sinner never prays. He may utter words, words, words: but "they that worship must worship in truth." The only precincts one must get inside of are those of sincerity; but he must be within those.

We saw, too, that the man who keeps on in Church work with some wrong not yet righted, promises himself that it will be the last of its kind. But it will not be. Psychology has said it. The molecular re-

arrangement in the brain that follows a misdeed gives solemn significance to the Savior's words, "Thou shalt deny Me *thrice.*" Only the strange self-conceit that characterizes sin deludes a man into thinking he can stop at one time. With other men he sees an initial misdeed repeated until it becomes a habit, and yet he persuades himself that his will is so much stronger than theirs the like will not happen to him. But it will. The same old temptation will return. It will come back flushed with victory, while he will go to meet it dejected by defeat. He will discover too that his will has been weakened by his first sin and his later irresolution more than he could have believed. Most serious of all, he is like Samson, who said, " 'I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free,' but he knew not that Jehovah was departed from him." God went out of his life the moment he adopted a course of insincerity, and into this new struggle he goes alone. Hawthorne (that subtle analyst of character) pictures in Wakefield a man

stepping aside from marital rectitude for a week only, as he thinks, but never returning until twenty years have passed. The words with which he concludes the sketch are worthy of memorizing. "Individuals," says he, "are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another and to a whole, that by stepping aside for a moment a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever."

We have now before us probably the mental conflict and fatal decision of Judas after his first offense. Instead of confessing, he concealed; instead of retiring, he remained an apostle; and instead of stopping at one theft, he kept on and on. He could not be ignorant that Jesus knew it: so we are forced to conclude that he did not care for that, so long as it was not bruited to the world. He was more concerned about his standing with men than with the Son of man. We call that practical atheism in him; but let us not forget that God the Spirit is just as near us and just as cognizant of our

lives as God in the flesh was to him. What, then, shall we call a like indifference now to all else save the world's opinion?

An unctuous repeater of "Lord, Lord," while constructively an atheist at heart—that was Judas after his die was cast. Hearts harden rapidly under such conditions: in what ways, let his case illustrate. Insincerity passes into hypocrisy: falseness reluctantly adopted, into falseness deliberately and artfully studied. "Why was not this ointment sold, and the money given to the poor?" that sounded fine and altruistic, and that is what he *said*. "Why could not Mary's gratitude have found expression in a form that would have had something in it for me?" that was what he really *felt*. He did not even stop at hypocrisy. Effrontery lies a step beyond, and he took the step. With no fitness longer for any place among the apostles, he forced himself into one of the chief places as late even as the Last Supper: he was less than an arm's length from Jesus when He dipped the sop. With his contract for the betrayal already closed, when Jesus

said, "One of you shall betray Me," he said, "Is it I?" the same as the rest.

The by-products of such degeneration are awful. Prayer has been called the coin of heaven. Insincerity demonetizes it; hypocrisy keeps it in circulation after it is known to be valueless; and effrontery prostitutes it to the purposes of villainy. It was with an act of devotion that Judas consummated his perfidy.

It is one of the soul's sequences that it can not cease to value its own worship without erelong ceasing to value that of everybody else. This it is that makes the sight of half a congregation sitting bolt upright and open-eyed during prayer so painful. Their own private devotions must have become mechanical and meaningless, or they could not now be so unmoved when another prays. The first hint of this process in Judas was given at the anointing before referred to. The simple beauty of that act of devotion was lost on him: it elicited from him nothing but a growl. By the night of Gethsemane his heart's ossification was complete.

We would have thought that one sanctity at least was safe from his irreverence:—that was the Master's practice of going at nightfall into the gloom of that old olive-garden, and there praying until His locks were wet with the dews of the morning. But no, it was there, upon his Lord at prayer, that he led the band that thirsted for His blood! O, it is a far cry from Galilee to Gethsemane, but sinning against sincerity will take any one of us, as it took him, over the whole road!

The hardening of his heart was rapid for the further reason that he was sinning against love. When a son lies to a trusting mother as to his whereabouts, companions, or expenditures, we correctly feel that the sin is peculiarly heinous. In this way it comes about that the selfsame maternal love is often seen to produce a world-wide difference in two sons. Both of them see that in her fondness she believes them to be better than they are. One resolves to make of himself all that she thinks him to be: the other says, "I can see as much of the seamy

side of life as I choose, and she will never believe it of me." Upon the one her love acts as a spur: upon the other, as an opiate. To the one she is a savor of life unto life: to the other a savor of death unto death. When Simeon at the temple door received the Child Jesus from His parents, and his eyes were opened to see that Incarnate Love was in his arms, it came upon him that now the world was to see its crowning illustration of this truth, and he said, "Behold, this Child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel!" And so it was: the same love that lifted Simon the Vacillating into Peter the Rocklike, and the Son of Thunder into John the Beloved, sank Judas ever nearer the pit. But a mother must love her child, even though it is at length borne in upon her that her very love is further hardening his heart. She is as helpless as the sun which must needs shine, even though its rays that give vigor to things living accelerate decay in things rotten. And Jesus could not give over loving Judas, even after that miscreant had bargained Him away at a

slave's price. As if to say, "Be it so," He rose from supper that night, took basin and towel, and washed His betrayer's feet, subscribing Himself in act as his most obedient servant. But all to no purpose. What ought to have been as coals of fire, had not the slightest effect. It was Peter, not Judas, who was made uncomfortable by it.

But concealment and "braving it out" must at last have an end. Then in one ruthless moment the deceiver's mask will be torn off, that the world may see, and the mirror will be held up wherein he must see his own repulsiveness. That moment with Judas seems to have been coincident with the betrayal in the garden. Nor can we wonder at it. Imagine the cordon of scorn by which he found himself environed. It is part of a soldier's religion to hate a traitor; and as his eyes ran over the scowling faces of the Roman legionaries in chiaroscuro under the flare of the torches he must have seen that they loathed him for a puppy. Turning for comfort to the priests, he must have learned, as our own Benedict Arnold did, that those

who are not above profiting by treachery nevertheless despise their tool. Their faces said, as plainly as words could have done, "You have finished your dirty work, and got your money: be off now!" Well, surely Peter and James and John would stand by him on the strength of auld lang syne. But no! their averted gaze served him notice that they would as soon think of contact with an adder. Last, and most crushing of all, there sounded in his ears the Master's voice —no scorn in it: rather the tremulousness of infinite pain—"Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" And to reconcile himself to all this, he had thirty pieces of silver! Yes, and many a backslider since has but the memory of one guilty night of riotous pleasure to compensate him for the loss of all else. O, when men go into the devil's market, it is incredibly cheap they sell themselves!

Self-knowledge is salutary, however painful. The feeling that one is the chief of sinners awakens in him a passionate yearning for remission of sins. This was, therefore,

Judas' opportunity for restoration. Alas, it was a wasted opportunity! He frittered it away by tardy, superficial, and even lawless expedients looking toward relief. They were tardy. He had not a moment to lose. That grouping in the garden was kaleidoscopic: in a moment it would break up, never to recombine. That was the time to return the silver; that the time to prostrate himself before the Savior for forgiveness. But he hesitated, and lost his chance. When at length he did bestir himself, the measures he took were superficial. He determined to get rid of the reminders of his sin, for they annoyed him; but if he ever made any attempt to get rid of his actual guilt, we have no evidence of it. Indeed, in the endeavor to get rid of the reminders of his sin, he committed more sin. When he returned to the temple with the silver, the priests were in a part of the building where he had no rights. But he was not the man to let a law of God stand in his way when he was in quest of happiness. And into the *holy place* he rushed, to throw down the money

at the feet of the priests. In imagining he could compound with God by simply giving up the reminders of his sin, he betrayed the fact that God, to his way of thinking, was no better than a fool. And in his disregard of God's law of the sanctuary he betrayed the further fact that he thought of Him as a martinet. His conduct can not be called repentance, for it was lawless.

When emptying his pockets did not bring peace of mind, he would seem to have despaired of ever having it again. And that conviction hurried him on to his culminating crime in the sad trilogy of Embezzlement, Betrayal, and Suicide. His act of sacrilege in the temple of Herod was quickly followed by another against the temple of his own body. His disregard of God's law of the sanctuary was prelude to a like disregard of His "canon 'gainst self-slaughter." And so, on the selfsame day, in the environs of Jerusalem two lives that had been bracketed together for three years past went out by violence. One of them went as the good shepherd goes when he stands between his

flock and their doom. He laid down His life for the sheep, and is loved as earth's holiest Example. The other, of late a worshiper at no shrine but that of Self, hanged himself bunglingly and died horribly. But the tragedy of his death was no greater than the tragedy of his later life. He remains the world's most solemn warning.

VI.

A STUDENT'S FAITH.*

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." MARK 11: 22.

I. ITS POSSIBILITY. If faith in God were a gift, men could not be told to have it. Poetic genius is such a gift: the poet is born, not made. Consequently, though ten thousand educators unite in deploring the fact that the stream of worthy poesy that flowed so unceasingly from Chaucer to Tennyson seems now to have dried up, no one of them would think of saying to his pupils, Have the poetic fire. That is recognized to be an afflatus.

Faith in God is not a congenital endowment like poetic genius: it is a later acquisition like knowledge. An educator has no hesitancy in saying to any pupil, Have knowledge. Where there is a will to get it,

*A Baccalaureate Sermon.

there is a way. Even in the most unpromising pupil it is only a question of application and sustained interest.

Some persons would fain deny that every one can have faith as certainly as he can have knowledge. They tell you that some people are naturally religious and others are not; that it is easy for the one class to have faith in God, while impossible for the other. But that is stating the case much too strongly. There are differences, without a doubt, between individuals as regards religious tendencies and aptitudes. But so, too, there are differences between young people as regards studious tendencies and alertness of mind. But these differences among students, of which you could not fail to became aware during your four years together as a class, are not fatal. More than once it has been demonstrated that studious habits can be created where once the studious inclination was lacking; and possibly some persons have shown you that in a long race the tortoise often outstrips the hare. The same thing may be maintained in refer-

ence to religious disabilities: they are never so great as to be insurmountable. It may be easier for some persons to acquire a strong faith than it is for others, but it is possible for all.

We are accustomed to say for the consolation of the youth who never could get a lesson easily, that possibly he is not as bad off as he thinks. What he has to dig out, he is the more likely to retain. He may have some classmate who has always been his envy because of his ability to get a lesson at a glance and then have time for the latest novel or for outdoor sports. Let me say, however, that the individual who can get a lesson at a glance has always seemed to me a mythical personage. But if in this I am mistaken, I will still maintain that a person who can get a lesson that easily misses getting what is of far more importance than this or that lesson—the habit of hard work. Now I want to say that there are similar compensations for the person to whom faith comes hard. There are a host of them in the world. Many of them grieve

over their doubts and incredulity. They envy those persons of their acquaintance who never had to acquire or reacquire faith in God. And yet, if I were a recruiting officer, selecting soldiers and looking especially to their ability and likelihood of withstanding the temptations of camp-life, I would say, Give me boys who acquired their religious convictions: not simply inherited them. It is the person who has fought to hold his faith as he has seen it slipping away from him, or the person who has agonized to reacquire a lost faith, whose religion is certain to be of a robust kind. It has won strength as the oak wins it, through wrestling. Nor would I choose differently if I were choosing men for any other tempted avocation. Even the man who is to preach will preach the better if the faith he preaches is one which he has won through wrestling.

Indeed, I may say that faith is like knowledge in that it is emphatically a personal acquisition. Such knowledge as you have was not crammed into you by some instructor,

but had to be mastered by you in your own proper person. The instructor could only go forward as fast as you went. You had to master one day's lesson before he could effectively give you the next. It would be a simple matter to impart faith if we had only to teach persons to say from memory the formulæ of faith. Why, the Apostles' Creed can be memorized in ten minutes; and it contains every great tenet of our faith. But the Church is foully slandered when her motto is said to be, "Open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I will make you wise." She knows she can only make those of her adherents wise whose eyes are wide open in eager questioning. Faith in God is not something that can be handed down to you from your parents nor passed out to you from the pulpit. That may describe the faith held by little children, but if it is to be kept through one's adult years it must be made our own.

There is no incongruity, then, in our being bidden to have faith in God: since it is never a gift of birth, but always a personal ac-

quisition. If it is something that can be acquired, it is perfectly proper that we should be urged to acquire it. But possibly you are thinking that some acquisitions are almost as far out of reach as any lacking natural endowment would be. There are American fortunes in nine figures that were the acquisition of the present holders of them; and yet for you to be told to acquire just such another would be like telling you to have the divine afflatus of the poet. Granting that faith in God is an acquisition, is it not like a great fortune in that only a few persons really do acquire it? I hold not. A fortune is one of the hardest things in the world to acquire, while faith is among the comparatively easy things, like knowledge or health. Think how the seeker after knowledge is favored by the existing tendencies to knowledge. First of all there are the tendencies of his own mind: its inquiring tendency, which makes him an animated interrogation point; its classifying tendency, which combines facts as a painter combines primary colors, and arrives at new

knowledge just as the painter gets new colors; its analyzing tendency, which breaks up a fact into its filaments, just as a prism breaks up a ray, and gives you instead of one fact a group, just as the prism gives you instead of one color seven. If such a service as this is rendered the seeker after truth by the acquisitive faculties of mind, its tendency to impart knowledge is just as helpful to him. There is no secretiveness in Science to match the secretiveness of Industry. A discoverer of truth must needs publish it: what he hears in the ear he must proclaim on the housetop. No Darwin could imitate Talleyrand and leave his message to the world in a sealed envelope under lock and key, not to be opened till a generation after his death. What an investigator discovers, he can not refrain from giving to the world as soon as he is sure his feet have reached solid ground. Almost as soon as he gets it you get it; for the newspaper, the magazine, and the free public library scatter it broadcast. You want to be up to date, and it is in your power to be.

Or think again how the seeker after health is aided by the body's tendencies to health. These are so many and so strong that if people would only take decent care of themselves the man of medicine would be almost out of a job. When you call him in, his reliance is less upon drugs than upon hygiene. He makes you stop doing things you ought never to have been doing, and begin doing the things you ought to have been doing all along; and then he trusts very largely to your God-given tendencies to health to do the rest. Now, just as a seeker after knowledge is aided by the tendencies of the mind toward knowledge, and as a seeker after health is aided by the body's tendencies toward health, so the seeker after God is aided by the soul's tendencies toward faith. It is not the believer who has a hard time with his own mind, but the unbeliever. Do not blame him for obtruding his unbelief on the most inopportune occasions: he has to keep talking it or it would die out. Do not blame him for being bitter or rabid: it is only by being an extremist that he can

permanently be an unbeliever at all. It was one of the most famous scoffers of France who wrote in his diary, "Men talk about the tendency to doubt. Did they but know it, it is not one-half so strong as the tendency of the soul towards belief."

How very strong is this tendency toward faith in God is illustrated by the very books that attempt to eliminate God from the universe. Instead of God doing things, they speak of Nature doing them. And it is Nature spelled with a capital "N:" the capital of personality, of majesty and mystery. As the treatise proceeds you note that Nature is spoken of as having forethought, and wisdom, and beneficence, and boundless power. This is what has happened: first, Nature was invested with mind, and then unconsciously her attributes were portrayed as being those we had thought belonged to God. The universe is so filled with evidences of mind that you can not describe its operations except in terms of mind. And if you were to deny the existence of God, you would be constrained straightway to

deify Nature, or Law, or something else. Why fight this tendency of the soul toward belief in God? Is the tendency discreditable? Is it antiquated or womanish? No more so than the body's hunger for food or the mind's hunger for knowledge. It is the soul's hunger for its proper nutriment. Let us be as fair toward the elemental cravings of the soul as we are toward the cravings of the body. When we read in Nansen's "Farthest North" that he and his companions looked upon a particularly fat walrus as a godsend, and ate the huge collops of adipose with as much relish as a schoolgirl eats caramels, we do not say, How filthy and disgusting! Rather we remember that it is the food demanded in polar latitudes. Or when we read in Secretary Wilson's report that our durum wheat is being exported to France, there to be made into loaves of bread as long as sticks of stovewood and well-nigh as hard, we do not say, What unaccountable taste! Rather we remember that the French peasant can not get the nitrogen his system requires from meat

as we do, because of the prohibitive price charged him, and so naturally gravitates to a kind of bread that contains an enormous amount of it. It ill becomes us, after thus judging men dispassionately in the matter of their foods, to be impatient of their beliefs. This tidal movement of humanity towards God is not a proof that the race is still half-civilized, but rather that it is still human. Spite of our artificial life there is still a natural movement of the soul towards God: "that which drew from out the boundless Deep turns again home." When one of America's most fearless investigators and ripest scholars dies, as did President Harper, with the words on his lips, "God helps: He always helps," it is but another token that the highest education and the finest culture may be counted upon to strengthen a man's faith in the Almighty, if he only keep himself open-minded.

II. Its Desirability. Having seen that we are not urged to attempt the impossible when we are bidden to have faith in God, it is time to say that, on the contrary, we are

urged toward something very desirable. The chances are that if we do not worship God we shall worship something else.

A strong faith is valuable first of all as a preventive of idolatries. Indeed, there is nothing so effectual to save one from the deep, ingrained selfishness of Egotism. I count this one of the very real perils of our day. Families do not average as large as they once did. In a distressing number of cases they consist of a father, a mother, and one child. That solitary child receives an amount of concentrated attention well adapted to turn an ordinary head. He is indulged to a dangerous extent. By the time his education in the public school, the college, and the professional school is completed quite a formidable sum of money has been spent upon him. It is well if he has not come to look upon all that as a matter of course: as being only what was coming to him. During the latter part of his lengthy schooling he is at a distance from his relatives, ensconced in bachelor quarters, with a growing love for the ease, the luxury,

and the irresponsibility of such a life. It is nothing short of a mercy if one does not come forth from such a régime offensively selfish. In many a case where a home has been disrupted and linked lives have been sundered on the grounds of incompatibility, it will be found that the husband was an intolerable egotist: made such during the years when his every whim was gratified and nobody had to be considered but himself. Do you ask how a strong faith in God will save you from this? I answer, that it will give you another center for your affections, and save you from becoming self-centered. It will make you feel that God's hand is upon you, and so cause you to realize the social responsibilities of an educated man. You are not being trained that you may get rich, or that you may "get on in the world;" but that you may the better get *under:* under your share of "the white man's burden," your share of the civic work, the philanthropic work, and the religious work, without which this world would be a dreary place.

One needs also to be a worshiper of God in order that he may not become a worshiper of Success. A college team came trotting out on the gridiron no great while ago, shouting in their staccato fashion, "Win, *win,* WIN the game!" Significantly enough, they made more than one attempt during the contest to put men on the other eleven out of commission by crippling them. Later, too, it developed that some of their own strong players were not students at all, except by a flimsy sort of fiction. They were more concerned about winning the game than about playing the game fair. "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" What kind of men may we expect from boys whose motto is, Anything to win? It is out of such stuff that the grafter, the shyster, and the quack are made. The biggest thing connected with this human unit is character. Any victory in which he leaves his character prostrate and bleeding on the field is a Pyrrhic victory. If God is very real to him, He will help him to see that. We are reading these days

about men of national reputation being prostrated with sickness as a result of damaging facts brought out against them by investigating committees, and because of the wave of public condemnation that has followed. If these men had had the fear of God before their eyes as they now show themselves to have the fear of men, they could never have entered upon a course of grafting and bribery. The beginnings of a host of sins are secret: they may go far and become deep-seated before one's neighbors become aware of them. Our best safeguard is in keeping God just as real to our consciousness as man, and in being even more studious to stand well with Him than with our neighbor.

But besides being a preventive of a great many objectionable practices, faith in God is a guarantee of certain virtues. One of these is courage: moral courage, more particularly. There may be fewer tests of physical courage now than of old, but there probably never were so many tests of moral courage. In a community like this there

are men in considerable numbers who either have a political future or imagine they have; who are either declared or receptive candidates for some desirable place. It is a rare year that does not bring them some test of their moral courage. They have to decide what to do, where to decide rightly looks like jeopardizing their political future. There are other men, who have slowly built up a fine business and are naturally loath to do anything that would undermine what has been so painfully built up. And to them comes many an unwelcome question on which it seems sure that if they take the right stand they will drive away patrons. What is happening to these men may erelong happen to you. In that day of test you will stand true, if stand you do, upheld by Wordsworth's vision that Duty is "stern daughter of the Voice of God." You will be withheld from sin in this twentieth century after Christ as Joseph was withheld almost as many centuries before Christ, by soliloquizing, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Still another virtue that will follow as a consequence of faith in God is optimism. The world in which you are to live is very hard on optimism. When you are reminded, as you doubtless will be, and that, too, with scant regard for gentleness, that "you are very young yet," the proof which will be adduced is that you are so optimistic. It is intimated that when you become more matured and seasoned you will lose all that. I say, God pity you if you do! The principal thing you are needed for is your optimism: if you allow it to ooze out, you will not be in demand at all. This is exactly what we mean when we say we must get some fresh, young blood into this enterprise or that organization. We mean that we must get some persons connected with it who have plenty of optimism. Out of that quality will come initiative, good nature, and indomitable push. It takes optimism to make a winner, be the enterprise what it may. As long as a man has it he has not crossed the dead-line, even though he be far past the age designated for chloroforming.

If, on the other hand, he has managed to lose it in his student days, he has superannuated before he graduated. Pessimism sees weak and sinful man, but fails to see God. It sees difficulties till their name is legion, but forgets Omnipotence. David must have met men who were saying, "What can one man do single-handed against a ring?" and his answer was, "By Thee do I run through a troop." He would seem to have been counseled that it was foolish in him to butt his head against a stone wall, and his answer was, "By my God I leap over a wall." A great faith in God burns barriers away. It shames a man out from under the juniper tree and goads him back to the firing-line. It revives one's drooping spirits by whispering:

> "But right is right, since God is God;
> And right the day must win.
> To doubt would be disloyalty;
> To falter would be sin."

III. Its Culture. If faith in God is so very desirable; if it is a requisite for success even more truly than good health or a

thorough education, then we may for a moment give thought to the question of caring for it. A great violinist of Europe is touring this country. Every voice of prudence dictates to him that he have a care for his fingers. And so he keeps them insured for a sum equal to a prince's ransom. As you well know, a prima donna is just as careful of her throat and of her general health. Is there not a hint to us in this? The ossification of a human heart is a far greater calamity than the stiffening of a violinist's fingers or the breaking of a singer's voice.

Now, do not imagine that my next advice is to be that you read only one side of religious questions. If blinders are in order anywhere, they are for horses, not for men. There is nothing to shy from in higher criticism: it has made the Word of God still more precious by the light it has thrown upon its literary and historical setting. Science is not something to be hurried past like a graveyard at night: not even evolutionary science. It has brought God immeasurably nearer a host of us. There is no danger in

any truth, provided you are at pains to get the whole truth. I have no fear for any young man so long as he keeps his mind open. His danger is apt to arise out of a foolish regard for consistency. Sometimes a callow youth proclaims himself an agnostic, and thereafter feels obligated to stick to it through thick and thin. When his tendencies to faith begin to reassert themselves, he represses them. His reading gradually ceases to be on both sides of the question, and comes to be only in such directions as will confirm him in the stand he has taken. It is a very easy matter for liberalism to pass into illiberalism, and to close the mind to all truth that is not exactly palatable.

If, then, my first advice is that you be perfectly frank and fearless seekers after truth, my second is that you keep yourselves clean, if you would keep your faith warm. The failure of many a young man to live purely accounts for his aggressive unbelief. His life has been such as to make him wish there were no God and no retributions; and

later that wish has become father to the thought.

And there is another aspect to this thought. There is an economy in our makeup. The man with the hoe in Millet's picture had all gone to muscle: his brawn had thriven at the expense of his brain. In the case of Hamlet's student "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," the reverse had happened: the brain had thriven at the expense of the body. This principle holds good if a man is so short-sighted as to indulge his animalism: he does it at the expense of his spiritual life. All goodness comes to appear to him dubious in proportion as his own vanishes, and God Himself recedes into the shadows. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

VII.

A FIRE NOT BLOWN BY MAN.

"I came to cast fire upon the earth."
LUKE 12: 49.

It is a pity we do not realize more deeply the wonder of fire. We ought to make the effort to imagine the world as it was before fire came to be used by the children of men. We should transport ourselves in thought back to the time when this our most familiar servant was new and strange: as strange, let us say, as are the wireless telegraph or the aeroplane to-day. Fortunately there are writers who help us when we essay this task. We think of Kipling, and remember the vividness of his picture of the jungle beasts bewildered and awestruck before the Red Flower: by which name they designated fire, which sprang up so quickly, whose nettle was so prickly, and whose efflorescence was so brilliant. Or we remember that gifted

school of anthropologists who have carried us back to those dim, prehistoric times when man the cave-dweller chipped his implements and weapons, one stone with another, because as yet he had no forge on which to shape instruments of iron; when he ate his food raw, because as yet he was a stranger to fire, the mother of cookery; and when in high latitudes he shivered through the greater part of a twelvemonth, because as yet he had no hearthstone. There was nought but savagery and barbarism before fire came; and there could be nought else to-day, if it had not come. Our dwellings would be no more than cheerless shelters without it, for the hearthside is the soul of the home. Our foods would many of them be unwholesome and dangerous were it not for fire; for heat is the great germicide. Our evenings would be insufferably long were it not for fire in the form of illuminants. Are we thankful for the great variety of foods we have, foods brought to us in many instances from the ends of the earth: the principal man for us to thank is

the stoker of the ocean freighter or the fireman of the locomotive. Fire brought these good things to us. Are we thankful for the mental pabulum we have in books so numerous and cheap as to be within the reach of all: fire drove the machines which made the paper that went into them; the presses that printed them, and the stitchers that bound them. Fire made them plentiful and cheap for us. But why pursue farther what is endless! Suffice it to say that the advent of fire among men meant also the advent of material comfort and the possibility of widely diffused mental culture.

To-day we hear our Lord saying that He came to bring to earth something as new and strange and revolutionizing as was fire when it came; something as beneficial to the souls of men as fire has been to their bodies; something that figuratively may justly be called fire, since it renders to mind and soul services similar to those which are rendered by fire to the material world. That something is none other than the spiritual life or the Christ-life.

A FIRE NOT BLOWN BY MAN.

I. One reason, without a doubt, why Jesus calls the spiritual life fire is because it is A CONSUMING INFLUENCE. The corn-belt in which we live affords us a beautiful sight each year in the evenings of early Spring. If we climb some eminence we see at scores of places in the great circle lines of living fire, rank on rank, running across fields or climbing the hillsides and disappearing over the crest. You are at no loss as to their meaning. The farmers have raked the cornstalks of last year into windrows, and now are burning them. They are clearing the ground in readiness for a new crop. The old dead stuff would be a hindrance and nuisance else. The first step must be to get rid of it. Just so the first effect of the new spiritual life in men is to make them see that there are certain things in their past life which must be at once and forever eliminated. They are incompatible with a better life. Were one to tolerate them, he would find them hindrances, if not also insurmountable obstacles. Zaccheus, a tax-farmer and extortionate screw, sees

Jesus and feels a rising desire to be like Him. But his second thought is a realization that that is an impossibility yet awhile. Some things he must do first. For one, he must disgorge before he can hope to be either good or useful. But a great many of the people whom he has wronged are dead. Since he can not go to them and hand back the overcharge, would he not better just keep that part at least? Not for a minute. It is an evil suggestion of the tempter: let the answer be complete and final, for the sooner it is silenced the better. What he can not hand back to the dead shall be given to the poor. To be sure, that will cut his fortune right in two! But what of that: the money fairly burns in his pockets now, and that is the way it shall go. Then, in the case of the living: they have been kept out of the use of their money for a long while. It is but fair that they should have back both the principal and interest. "But, Zaccheus, that will require endless figuring, to get at the exact amount in each case," whispers his evil voice. "Not at all," is his answer; "I

am in no mood for higgling and cheeseparing in this matter. I would rather do too much than too little: in order to be sure that I am making ample reparation in each case, I am going to give back to each man his principal and three hundred per cent interest. *Fourfold:* that shall be the basis of the restitution." That was what the spiritual life did for Zaccheus in its very incipiency. It burned up his avarice, root, branch, and fruits. And then, when no thorns were left to do their choking worst, the Savior implanted the good seed. "This day," said He, "is salvation come into this house."

Nor is it alone mammonism that must disappear under God's consuming fire, as a preliminary to conversion. We can not forget that Jesus said to every seeker after God, "If thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, first go, and be reconciled with thy brother." You must be willing that the Spirit of God shall incinerate that estrangement. Nothing good or beautiful can grow in the soul so long as an ani-

mosity preempts the ground. It is one of the unfailing characteristics of a genuine revival that it burns up a lot of nasty little feuds that have existed a heathenish while between relatives, or neighbors, or even Church-workers in a community. Until that was done nothing constructive could be done.

Animalism, too, must go the way of avarice and animosities. When Paul stood before Felix he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, self-control, and the judgment to come. The trend of that reasoning is not difficult to surmise. Felix was given to understand that his absolutism and his libertinism made him unfit for the judgment to come. He was urged, you may be sure, to let God's consuming fire reduce his besetments to ashes. But no! each was too dear to that man of strong passions and weak will. He wavered and trembled, it is true; but he never screwed his courage to the sticking place. Because he would not leave the primrose path of dalliance he could not set his feet in the way of the Lord.

Still another thing that can not stand be-

fore God's consuming fire is self-righteousness. When the Holy Spirit enters the heart His first achievement is to produce what the fathers called awakening and conviction. He makes us see that our aforetime reliances were cobweb reliances; that our carefully constructed defenses were defenses of clay; and that even our vaunted righteousness was a minus quantity. He leads us from the standpoint of the Pharisee, saying, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men," to the standpoint of the publican, who, smiting his breast and lacking confidence to lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, cried, "God, be Thou merciful to me, a sinner." Were we asked in that auspicious moment what had become of our old-time self-satisfaction, we could only answer in candor that it was all gone: "a fire not blown by man" had consumed it. The old satisfaction is gone, and the new is yet to come: we shall be satisfied again, but it can not be till we awake in His likeness.

There is another aspect of this truth. If, as we have seen, the fire from heaven clears

the ground and makes constructive character-building possible, it also tests the later superstructures that we rear. There is a notable paragraph in one of Paul's letters to the Corinthians which brings this out. The Corinthians were fortunate in their city site. It was a region unvisited by earthquakes. But many of them, when thus given an inch of security, took an ell. Since they had nothing to fear from earthquakes, they acted as if they had nothing to fear from any other source. They put up flimsy dwellings of wood: thatched with hay, straw, or stubble. They forgot that fire was to be considered as well as earthquakes. Just so, Paul intimates that in the matter of stability we have a foundation in Jesus Christ that leaves nothing to be desired. But on that foundation men may build structures of wood, hay, straw, or stubble: fabrics of shams, insincerities, and conventionalities. The Christ of judgment will expose the hollowness and flimsiness of such lives. He will send or permit the fire-test. The last and great day of judgment may be a long way

off, for aught we know to the contrary; but almost every day we live is a day of judgment. We follow a Christ who said, "For judgment came I into this world." Now He sends us the test of work assigned, for which we find ourselves unfitted; now, the test of searching questions asked, by which we find ourselves embarrassed and revealed; and now, the test of crosses imposed, for which we find ourselves unbraced. "Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work, of what sort it is."

Not only does the risen Christ subject individuals to such tests, but also institutions. The ax is laid at the root of every tree—every upgrowth. If it does not bear wholesome fruit, and a reasonable amount of it, it is cut down and cast into the fire. Already the Christ-life has proved a consuming fire to slavery, and absolutism, and priestcraft. Erelong it will likewise cauterize out of the body politic the drink evil and the social evil. There have been mighty conflagrations,

where the only thing that saved the flimsy, rotten, squalid dwellings of the slums was a change in the direction of the wind, just as the fire was on the point of reaching them. But you can rest assured that no hateful institution will be saved from the onward march of Christian sentiment in any such way. There will be no change in the currents which fan the flame: they blow from the heavenly hills and are everlasting. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever: unweariedly and uncompromisingly hostile to every demoralizing institution. He will not be content until He has made this a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth.

II. Another reason why Jesus calls the spiritual life fire is because it is A TRANSFORMING INFLUENCE. On a pair of deer's antlers in our old home hung a pioneer's rifle: a weapon so long and so heavy that it was a man's job to lift it to the shoulder and aim it. Among the accouterments that went with it were an iron ladle and a pair of

bullet-molds. It was an interesting time for us children when the day came to "run bullets," as it was called. The iron ladle was filled with slugs of lead and set down upon a bed of live coals. By and by the pieces of lead began to grow restless; little movements among them began to be noticeable; their angularities began to smooth out: and then in less time than it takes to tell it they lost their identity completely and became part of a little molten pool. It was not a pretty pool to look at: all scum-covered as it was. We had not dreamed there were so many impurities in lead until the fire revealed their existence. But now the time had come for the master-hand to use its cunning. The ladle was tilted a little, and there ran out from beneath the scum, from which it was now forever separated, and into the molds, a most beautiful and lustrous stream. It was the same lead; but how different since it had had its new birth, since fire had re-created it! It went into the crucible impure; it came out pure. It went in rough and jagged; it came out in shapely sphe-

roids. It went in dull and lusterless; it came out bright. I am thankful for that early experience, since it helps me to understand our Christ when He says, "I came to cast fire upon the earth." O, He came bringing into the world a spiritual force which should melt stubborn hearts, and cleanse impure hearts, and brighten clouded hearts, and make old things pass away and all things become new. There is a recent book which has for its major title, "Twice-born Men," and for its minor, "A Clinic in Regeneration." In its preface there is found a scathing denunciation of Christian people for their present-day incredulity in reference to conversion. One of the chapters that enforces this preface tells of an ex-pugilist who had gone down and down until he had been guilty of almost every vice and crime under the sun. In his better days he had married a good, sweet woman; and now her quiet, uncomplaining conduct, unaltered by his worst outbreaks, seemed to irritate him. Though she spoke never a word of reproach, she was none the less like an accusing con-

science to him. It became a mania with him to put her out of the way: and one day he actually went into a drinking-place to prime himself with brandy for the horrid deed. In that most unlikely place and at that most unlikely juncture the Spirit of God got hold of him and re-created him. For years since that fateful day he has rung true. The same force that changed his heart in a twinkling, changed his face also in process of time. A strange refinement came into his features. His wistfulness for souls became a master-passion and made him an incredible force for personal religion among the sad, the sorrowful, the broken and the lost who cram the shabby streets of Whitechapel. O friends, God has not left Himself without witness of this sort in every age: nor do we need to go to London for present-day examples. Even among our ministerial acquaintance are men who were snatched as brands from the burning. The transformation of Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Apostle was paralleled in their case. And the laity of our acquaintance could mightily swell

this "clinic of regeneration." He knows our Churches but slightly who does not know in them some men now justly held in honor for their lofty probity, who once were certainly headed for the pit.

God forbid that any man should see in these instances encouragement to have his fling for awhile, in the expectation of righting up after a little. I would not for worlds lead any one to acts of presumptuous sin. I mention these cases of remarkable conversion only as proofs that the risen Christ is here now with His transforming power. I mention them in the hope that we shall not confine our labors exclusively to the comparatively innocent and easily saved members of our Church families; but that we shall go after those, whether in high life or in low, who seem at the farthest remove from Christ and His Church.

III. Still another reason why Jesus calls the spiritual life fire is because, like fire, it is AN ENERGIZING INFLUENCE. Here is a huge touring-car, whose immense weight is still further increased by several occupants.

That ponderous machine is being impelled forward over the road at the rate of thirty feet a second. You undertake to explain to a novice what a triumph of ingenuity it is, and you tell him that that big mass of dead weight is hurled forward ten or twenty feet by a single tiny drop of gasolene. But while that may be the truth, and nothing but the truth, it is not the whole truth. First of all the tiny, insignificant drop was vaporized and mixed with air; and then it was energized by fire. A spark was shot through it, and ignited it with an explosion. As a tiny drop of fluid it was an inert, powerless thing; as a gas the drop had become a Hercules; and when fire was superadded it became a Titan. Is there anything like that in the effect of spiritual fire upon a man? Most assuredly there is. I see Christ cast His ethereal fire among the Twelve, and straightway their courage, energy, zeal, and power become amazing. It is not long before people are saying of them that they are turning the world upside down. I see the Christ just outside the walls of Damascus

baptize with this fire from heaven a notorious persecutor, whose pockets were even then stuffed with search-warrants and death-warrants; and though his energy before in the cause of bigotry had been remarkable, his energy now in the cause of truth becomes marvelous, immeasurable: his appetite for work simply insatiable.

Petroleum in its crude state would be worse than useless in a motor-car. A drop of it might exude into the mixing-chamber, but it would not be changed thereby into a gas: it is not volatile enough for that. A spark shot into it would produce no access of energy. No, the crude oil must first go to the refinery and be made over: it must be purified, transformed, re-created into something more responsive to contact with fire. Saul of Tarsus was made over. He went through God's refinery; and thereafter the stimuli from on high counted with him. If one were asked to-day why the Church of God does not give greater evidence of power, answer might truthfully be made that it is because the divine spark which Christ sends

forth falls into wet tinder. It is because there are so many unrenewed souls amongst us. They have never benefited by God's consuming fire, which burns up worldly and sinful appetites; nor by His transforming fire, which makes men over into the likeness of Christ; and consequently they are in no condition to respond to His energizing fire. It is like trying to get results from crude oil that can only be gotten from gasolene. "The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God." Let it begin first at us.

"Refining fire, go through my heart;
Illuminate my soul,
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole."

VIII.

AN OUTCAST'S CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

"*Thou art a God that seeth.*" GEN. 16: 13.

These are but six little words: yet if any man can speak them with conviction, if he can believe them with his whole heart, they are capable of working a complete transformation in him. Take the wings of thought and transport yourself back to the time when, for aught we know, they first found utterance. They fell from the lips of a woman in pitiable plight. She was a bondwoman who had innocently incurred the wrath of her mistress. Thereafter what had been her home became her place of torment. She was made the recipient of such hard usage that at last she could stand it no longer. The time came when she felt that patience had ceased to be a virtue; and without saying "By your leave" to any one, she

incontinently fled. We can easily hazard a guess as to the cud of bitter fancy she chewed upon her journey. There was something wrong about this system of morganatic marriage or concubinage which had brought down upon her another woman's jealousy and wrath. As for herself, she was sure she had been more sinned against than sinning. And yet by the perverse double standard already fastened upon the world, she, the less of the two offenders, was made the greater sufferer. The only home she could claim upon the face of the earth had been made intolerable for her. What was to become of her she did not know: she could only guess and shudder.

While her mind was thus busy, her feet were carrying her into the Wilderness of Shur. A desert is an awful place. It is the empire of Monotony. Far as the eye can reach it offers no variety: there is the same dun color, the same endless stretch of sand dunes, the same crunch of the grit under one's feet. The desert, too, is the abode of Silence. No chirp of cricket, nor lilt of

song-bird, nor drone of bee, nor plash of waterfall, nor rustle of nodding grain-fields, nor hum of human industry ever breaks upon its repose. Into that region of emptiness and silence Hagar went: only to find One awaiting her there in those solitudes, and speaking to her out of the oppressive silence. It was none other than the great God Himself. "He was interesting Himself in the likes of her;" and that went over her like a surge, unbefriended as she was. He evidently knew all about her troubles and intentions. He thought enough of her to try to hold her back from a grievous misstep. He knew just what would comfort her and put new life into her; and such words He spoke. That was enough to open up the fountains of the great deep; and with brimming eyes and leaping heart she cries, "Thou art a God that seeth." It was this outcast's unique honor first to discover and proclaim God's intimate knowledge of the individual.

I. From time to time men arise who would have us believe that there was no Per-

son there to speak to Hagar and be spoken to. It may have relieved her pent-up feelings to ejaculate as she did; but they tell us that was all the good that came of it. God, they say, is no more than omnipresent Energy. He has no more personality than gravitation. To speak to Him is as truly a relic of superstition as it was for the ancients to address prayers to the rivers, the stormwinds, the sun, and the moon. This would be a most serious matter if true. Think where it would put us. We are met to-day in a house erected to God and dedicated to His worship. We have been singing hymns that told in forms of lyric beauty our love for Him. We have been reading out of a Book which we call the Word of God. All these and a thousand other things we do are vain if so be that God has no personality. But we are not going to give up our faith and religious practices on the unsupported word of some iconoclast. We have lived long enough to see the unreliability of many another revolutionizing utterance. For centuries mankind spoke of

the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer, and never thought of saying anything else. Then men arose who told us that Homer was a mythical personage, and that the immortal epics heretofore attributed to him were the joint output of a school of rhapsodists. Because it seemed the progressive thing to believe, and because the theory was pressed with great positiveness and dogmatism, for a time it found wide acceptance. Then came a revulsion, so swift and complete that to-day the Homeric authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey is as firmly believed in as ever before in the history of the world. Similarly we were told, not many years ago, that there was no evidence in creation of what we call design. Paley in the eighteenth century had constructed a wonderful argument, in which, after showing that his timepiece, with its intricate arrangement of wheels and its ingenious contrivances for overcoming the alternations of heat and cold, must have had a designer, he advanced to show that the human body just as emphatically proclaimed a Designer.

This argument was pronounced a curio. What he had declared to be the result of a planning Mind was only the result of natural selection. That swing of the pendulum reached its limit a generation ago. To-day there are not lacking a host of careful and candid scientists who do not hesitate to say that their researches bring them constantly into the presence of a planning Mind. They find their greatest stimulus in the assurance that they can understand the processes of that majestic Mind through the processes of their own mind. They assume a personality in the Creator like the human personality, save that it is robed with infinity; and all the facts go to verify the assumption. In other words, the telescope, the microscope, and the test-tube do but confirm humanity's age-long and inveterate intuitions in reference to God.

Hagar went into the desert full of bitter thoughts about man: she came out full of jubilant thoughts about God. The head that had been bowed in brooding was now among the stars. The feet that had been

moving toward the path of *abandon* were now returning to the paths of duty. The consciousness of God was needed to supplement her consciousness of man. What she needed every one of us needs. We need what I may designate a social consciousness, and to counterbalance it we need a consciousness of God. A man is not truly a man unless he has both. For instance, a man is not a true man who lives detached, either geographically or intellectually, from his fellow-men. The hermit is always a stunted man; and so, too, is the man who retires within his own shell. Other men educate us. They rub off our angles. They shame us out of our eccentricities. They disabuse us of our whimwhams. We need the world fully as much as it needs us. But while the social consciousness is invaluable, we may have it in excess. We bathers used to immerse our heads in the water, and then a companion would strike two stones together a few yards away. Instantly the pain in our ears was almost maddening. I think of that experience when I see persons almost killed

by what somebody has said about them, or almost unnerved for fear that if they do anything very assertive something dreadful will be said about them. The death-sentence of many a deserving enterprise has been this sentiment, heard by its promoters from scores of persons, "I do not want to get people down on me." People in our day are mortally afraid of getting other people down on them. Our social consciousness is so abnormally developed as to be positively a burden. To offset and counterbalance our consciousness of men we need a well-developed consciousness of God. Until a man has it, he can scarcely be called a free man. He is too much beholden to conditions and to public opinion. What people are saying determines what he will do and how far he can be induced to go. They really control him. It was not so with the early Christians. I listen to Peter, curious to know what answer he will make for himself and the other apostles when told that if they continue to preach Christ they will take their lives in their own hands; and this is his un-

hesitating response, "We must obey God rather than men." I seek the explanation of Paul's undeviating diligence, spite of threats and persecutions that might well have dismayed the stoutest heart; and here it is from his own lips, "Am I seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." The apostles turned the world upside down because they were men of sublime moral independence. As it was then, so is it still: the world despises or pities the man who is continually nervous for his standing with men; but it has unbounded admiration for those who think only of duty, and do it in despite of personal consequence. The men who move us are men who see God as well as man; who see God more clearly and emphatically than they see men; and who are more molded by their fellowship with God than by their fellowship with men.

If we need Hagar's vision for moral independence, still more do we need it for optimism. The newspaper, which is too nearly the sum total of a busy man's read-

ing these times, is almost completely a record of man's doings. Sad to say, it is very largely a record of man's misdoings. It is hard to read it without frequent sinkings of heart. It shows us so much of man the mammon-worshiper and of man the animal, that it is not strange if we infer that the world is full of forces that make for unrighteousness. Let a person reach that point of view, and he is like rubber out of which the life has gone: he has no more resiliency, no upward rebound when cast down, no recuperative powers of the soul. What he needs, what we all need, is a vision of that Power, unmeasured and immeasurable, which makes for righteousness in the world. This is not the devil's world: it is God's world. He who took uncounted ages to create it is not going to show raw haste, you may be sure, in re-creating it: but by His own wise methods and in His own slow, sure way He is changing it into His Kingdom.

II. In what capacity does God see me? O, such is His infinite variety that in many capacities He sees me. For instance, He

sees me as the potter sees the vessel he is fashioning. I visit our adjacent Rookwood and get my first sight of a potter working at his wheel,

> "And wonder more and more to see
> That shapeless, lifeless mass of clay
> Rise up to meet the master's hand,
> And now contract and now expand,
> And even his slightest touch obey."

That man before me has two ideals which he is working out: an ideal of strength and an ideal of beauty. He so gauges the distance between his thumb and fingers that the vessel being formed shall have ample strength; and he so bends his wrists and digits that it shall have only lines of beauty.

> "And shall it to the potter say,
> 'What makest thou? Thou hast no hand,'
> As men who think to understand
> A world by their Creator planned,
> Who wiser is than they."

Or, again, God sees me as a shepherd. Yonder is a shepherd with his flock. Note that in particular: he is *with* them day and

night, so constantly and so intimately that he knows them and they know him. He has a name for each of them, and calls them by name. See how he watches them. There is a severe drouth, and his keen eye discerns the first sign that they are beginning to waste away. They could never be trusted to find for themselves the little, widely scattered patches of pasturage, hidden away in deep valleys: so he leads them to the green pastures. He is quick to note those heaving flanks and all the kindred distress-signals of thirst; and straightway by the shortest route he leads them beside the still waters. Even his surgery is a kindness. One of Hardy's stories—that entitled "Far from the Madding Crowd"—is a pastoral picture. Its hero, Gabriel Oakes, is a Devon shepherd. One night he is sent for in great haste to come to an adjacent farm in a matter of life and death. That day a flock of sheep has broken into a clover-field, and now they are beginning to die from their indiscretions, with the prospect that the last one of them will go, unless something is in-

stantly done for them. Armed with a lancet the shepherd hurries thither and inflicts wounds, sharp, deep, and painful; but each wound he makes is life-giving. O, God's chastenings and retributions are like that! They hurt, but they cure: they are meant to save us, and they do save.

Then, too, God sees me as a Benefactor. Just because He has done so much for me He follows me with an extraordinary interest. Many years ago I had a first invitation to dine in the hospitable home of a neighbor, whose son Harry was in our Sunday School. Some one came into the room soon after my arrival, whom my host introduced as "our Joe." I turned, to find myself confronting a young man whose face was like a map of Ireland, and whose ears were uncommonly large, outstanding, and diapnanous. Evidently "our Joe" was no brother of Harry: as was further manifest when his surname was given. Later in the evening, when the boys had gone out, it was explained to me that he was originally what is known about the Public Landing as a "wharf-rat." Mr.

F—— had been attracted to him by his brightness and cheeriness; had taken the orphan home, adopted him, educated him; and now had the satisfaction of seeing him holding a good position as clerk on a river steamer. Many times in the years that followed I was thrown with my friend, but never that he did not have something to tell me about Joe. He could tell just how many promotions the boy had had, when they came, and how much his pay was advanced each time. He knew at just what point up river or down Joe was on that particular day. The time came for Harry to be married; and Joe's boat that afternoon, of all times, had to be late getting in. So we just sat and waited: neither the wedding nor the dinner could go on without his presence. It is human nature for a benefactor thus to watch and love one whom he has befriended, and to rejoice in his successes. But, friends, it is human nature because it is also the divine nature. We are made in God's image in this attribute. He has done too much for us to ever forget us. Sometimes He may

be out of our thought, but we are never out of His thought.

Best of all, God sees me as Father. That means personal interest, cumulative interest, permanent interest. No one who has known a father's feelings can feel other than pity for the celibate. As it seems to us, his life is impoverished of its cheapest and yet most priceless satisfactions. Existence is shorn for him of some of its loftiest motives. We find ourselves wondering what the childless man has to think about, to talk about, and to plan for. We should say that our thoughts for our children are the most of our life and the best of it. If it is a weakness to talk about them to others, it is at least an honorable weakness, and we must all of us confess to it. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. They are the soul of our soul and the life of our life.

"After this manner therefore pray ye, *Our Father,* who art in heaven." He loves us, and He does not care who knows it. He has none of man's foolish fear that somebody will find it out or that He will be too

demonstrative. He follows us at our work. He rejoices with us when we rejoice. He sympathizes with us when we suffer. His best hours are those when He has us close to Him.

III. But when does God see me? Is He like the physician who calls to see me only when I am sick, or like the collector who never comes save when he has a bill to present? Is it only when there is something unusual or desperate in my case that He sees me? Far from it. He sees me when I plan: and He must find a man's plans very interesting. There is often such a very slight relation between their magnitude and the time allotted to one for carrying them out. Some men rather enjoy throwing a wet blanket over youthful ambitions. "All this you propose to do in your threescore years and ten, do you? Well, if you lived to be as old as Methusaleh, you could never compass all you have blocked out." But, though God must know this as well as our elders, He never chills our enthusiasms. He would rather see us planning enough work

for ten lifetimes than folding our hands and arguing that nothing can be done in a single lifetime for this slow-moving old world. "Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for My name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart." He counts our plans as well as our achievements, in grading us. The old rabbi in Browning had the right idea of God's oversight when he said:

"Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice.

"But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.

"Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Then, too, God sees us not only as we plan, but also as we work. At our Annual Conferences we ministers report on our work. It is a rare session that passes without illustrating the proneness of men to apologize for their work. Indeed, the tendency crops out elsewhere than in Conferences. Wherever Church workers report on their work it is seldom that you do not hear some note of apology. Their report would have been better if they had had better health, or better support, or a better field to work in. All this is painful to proud natures. They say to themselves: "I would die before I would complain, and make a bad mouth, and apologize like that. I would not put myself in a position where people

could remark that a poor workman always complains of his tools. Besides, I do not have to. The only Person whose good opinion of my work is really vital knows all about every handicap under which I do it. He will make every necessary allowance, for He is absolutely just." For precisely the same reason Christian workers possessed of a sanctified pride scorn to advertise their work; to carry fulsome write-ups of themselves and their victories to editorial sanctums, while men are made to feel contempt and angels weep. When they have gotten a puff out of it, they have gotten all they ever will: verily, they have received their reward. If you or I ever did a good thing for the sake of getting our names in the papers, then the thing was not good after all. A sacred action had a selfish motive, and that is sacrilege. But if we ever did a good thing from a good and disinterested motive, it was seen and it was given its full value by the only One whose good opinion it is essential we have. Further than to please God we do not have to exert our-

selves. The only way we can permanently please men is by seeking only to please God.

Once more, God sees us as we suffer. He is never more like a potter than right here. There comes a time when the potter says of the pitcher he is making, "The next thing for it must be the fire. I have given it all the strength I can without the aid of fire: which is not much. If I spared it the fire, it soon would crumble to dust. Only in the furnace can the clay get a metallic ring and the qualities of endurance. I have done all I can in the way of beautifying it without the aid of fire: which is not much. If I spared it the fire, it would never cease to be the dull thing it is now: it would never acquire the ability to reflect the light and the sky. If I spared it the fire, little of the beauty now latent in it would ever come out. I simply must put it through the fire; but you may rest assured that I shall not allow it to remain there long enough to damage it." And so he keeps strict watch over it, and when the fire has imparted to it all it can of beauty and strength, he is the first to

see it, and he draws it forth. Be it our wisdom to say, when we suffer:

"Pain's furnace heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow;
And all my heart in anguish shivers
And trembles at the fiery glow;
And yet I whisper, 'As God will,'
And in His hottest fire stand still."

IX.

TABITHA: LAY WORKER.

"And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." ACTS 9: 39.

Chronology and geography are said to be the two eyes by means of which we see history. It is certain that we can not understand this bit of narrative unless we transport ourselves in imagination to the rude age and the amphibious town in which Tabitha lived. Could we thus visit ancient Joppa as it appeared in the apostolic age, the first thing that would strike us as unusual would be the disproportionate number of widows in it. This was due to the occupations of the citizens. In large part they were seafarers. Navigation in that age was

Kingsley's: Three Fishers.

attended with greater perils than any which we know to-day. With no mariner's compass to guide them when sun or stars were shut out, there was nothing for them but to hug the shore: and that, too, on a coast abounding in sunken rocks and destitute of all that elaborate system of buoys, targets, ranges, lighthouses, and life-saving stations with which we are familiar. Having no barometer, they could not always forecast, however weatherwise, those sudden storms that swept down like St. Paul's Euraquilo, unheralded and unsuspected. In this way it happened that many a wife in Joppa had bidden her husband good-bye on the quay and waved her hand to him as he put out, expecting nothing else than his return at nightfall; while the all-knowing One saw that they were destined never to meet again until the sea should give up its dead.

Another contingent of Joppa's population was engaged upon the land, in farming or sheep-raising or in the carrying trade. Whichever it was, they were exposed to perils scarcely less numerous than those in-

cidental to a sailor's life. Joppa lay in the allotment of Dan. The ridge which rose abruptly behind it and formed the backbone of Palestine was crisscrossed with deep ravines, attaining in many instances the dimensions of miniature canyons. These gloomy defiles were dense with a subtropical undergrowth, and their limestone walls were honeycombed with caverns. In consequence, while their relatively easy grades made them the natural routes for travelers, their numerous lurking-places suited the robber's purpose as well as if made to his order. The policing of such a region would have been very difficult if it had been attempted: under the inefficient though extortionate rule of Rome it was not very seriously attempted. Jacob's dying prophecy that the tribe of Dan would be like an adder darting out of its covert in the rear of a horseman, and fleshing its fangs above the horse's hoofs, causing it to rear and throw its rider backwards, was finding its fulfillment. Many New Testament allusions show us how prevalent brigandage was in that disorderly age.

We know that there were at least three highway robbers in the prisons at Jerusalem at the time Jesus was apprehended. The moral state of public sentiment was so bad, too, that the worst of these three was released at the request of the populace. There was nothing improbable or uncommon in our Lord's picture of a traveler falling among highwaymen and being stripped, beaten, wounded, and left for dead. There was just as little that was uncommon in his picture of Bedouin plunderers coming upon the sheepfolds by night to steal, to kill, and to destroy; or in that of the good shepherd laying down his life for his sheep. In all this anarchy and rapine the vicinage of Joppa held a bad pre-eminence. Because then of the perils to which its breadwinners were exposed, both by land and sea, there was a disproportionate number of widows in the place.

The widow's lot in that age, too, was a peculiarly hard one. It is sad even in our own time: a clinging nature left without its natural support, an unpracticed and unsus-

pecting nature forced to transact business in a designing and over-reaching world. Who shall say that that is not pathetic? Still, many things that now somewhat mitigate the pangs of widowhood had no existence then. There was nothing analogous to life insurance, annuities, or homes for the aged. A widow could not live upon the interest of money a provident husband had laid by, for the scant wages of the period did not admit of the saving, and the Mosaic law did not allow the taking of interest. Besides there were not then so many occupations a woman could enter. Indeed, there was almost nothing she could do but go into the fields and drudge her life away like a slave.

Under the best of conditions, with her breadwinner alive, the ancient housewife's day was a long and busy one. We have a picture of her routine in the Book of Proverbs: rising before day to resume her endless task by a light she had not thought it worth while to put out when she left it at midnight to snatch a few hours of sleep; first preparing food for her household, and

then turning to the problem of their clothing, seeking wool and flax, cleansing it, spinning it, weaving, cutting, fitting, and sewing it into garments. Even after all this there remained the problem of the upkeep of her house, and we read, "She layeth her hands to the distaff, and her palms to the spindle, and maketh for herself carpets of tapestry." Note in this description that every process was by hand, and was by consequence a tedious one. It can readily be understood that a woman who did all this had little time for anything else: while if, through the untimely death of her husband, she was forced to become breadwinner as well, she would have the keen humiliation of seeing her children grow more and more ragged in spite of all she could do. Joppa had many such broken-spirited widows.

It was not long after Pentecost before Christianity found its way thither. This is not to be wondered at, for Commerce has always proved the handmaid of Religion, and the gospel has spread along the most frequented routes of travel and of trade.

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Among the disciples won to Christ in Joppa was a woman who was known both by those of the Hebrew and the Greek tongues as the Gazelle. Reference was had to one of the loveliest of animals. Its beauty, however, is of a slight, frail type. For that very reason it best described this petite, spirituelle, fragile morsel of womanhood who had espoused the cause of the Nazarene. The gazelle was besides the most timid of creatures. It came down into the valleys at night to feed, and retired before daybreak, as if afraid of its own shadow. To stalk a herd of them was so difficult a feat that failure involved no dishonor, while success was a triumph. It was almost impossible to get within bowshot of them. Did they but hear the least noise, or whiff a scent at all unusual, off they dashed down the wind. So timid and so retiring by nature was the person whose life we study to-day. Whatever her original name may have been, the Gazelle was the fond term of endearment which the people of two races bestowed upon her as if by an inevitable necessity.

Like every other young convert, she wanted to do something. Her first question was what she could do and ought to do for Christ. She could not preach: her own spirit and the spirit of the age forbade that. She must dismiss from the calculation everything that involved travel, every distant task; for the Orient does not take kindly to the unattended travel of woman. But why repine at that? Was there not plenty to do right at home? Could she not, without leaving the streets and lanes of Joppa, find it possible to imitate the Master going about everywhere doing good? To be sure, she could. There were those poor widows who drudged from daylight to midnight, and yet could never hope to catch up with their work. She could come to their relief, and she would. Henceforth her needle should supplement the labors of theirs.

Doubtless she had a struggle with her timidity before she could bring herself to it. Doubtless, too, the tempter tried to convince her that she had not the strength for such

confining and exacting work. And perhaps she had not, for in the midst of it she fell sick and died. But though she lost her life, she really saved it: saved it from fruitlessness and unprofitableness. She was like the corn of wheat which abideth alone except it fall into the ground and die. She was dead, but her work followed her; she yet spoke; she still lived in the hearts of her beneficiaries and neighbors.

Still they were not content merely to resolve that her name and her influence should not die. They could not understand why *she* should die at that juncture, when she had made herself indispensable. And hearing that Peter was at an adjacent town, they sent for him post-haste, in the hope that he would raise her from the dead. He came. He saw the assembled widows weeping inconsolably. He was shown the garments she had made. With choking utterance they told him that every one of those countless stitches was a stitch of love. He looked upon her pallid form, lovely even in death,

and he could not resist the tides of compassion that welled up within him. He called her back to her friends and her mission.

Then, though his business in Joppa seemed done, he lingered many days: not to look out hour after hour upon the Mediterranean, though that employment would have afforded rare pleasure to one who had been brought up on the water; nor to observe the life of his host, Simon the tanner, though that must have been a sight to give him a delight surpassing any the sea could afford, though every sunrise made of it an amethystine expanse and every sunset ran athwart it a pathway of gold. For Simon belonged to an ostracized class, and his conversion was an illustration of the new faith's power to save even the outcast. Rather he lingered, as it would seem, for the exquisite pleasure of seeing Tabitha again pursuing the work that Death had interrupted.

Nor alone for that. Jerusalem, which he left but yesterday, had its host of widows likewise; and they were being cared for, too. But there it was by corporate agency, the

whole Church gathering and administering the relief: here it was by individual agency, a warm heart being touched by the sight of need, and without waiting for the appointment of a committee or the election of a president, secretary, and treasurer, setting out on the errand of mercy. The Jerusalem way was not working to his satisfaction. When it had come to be known that the Church there was in possession of a relief fund for widows, there had been such an influx of them that the apostles found they could not continue making the distribution themselves. It took so much of their time that it left them none for the more important work of preaching. When this situation grew acute they had tried the experiment of entrusting the distribution to capable subordinates; but trouble of one sort was no sooner averted than trouble of another sort came. That first institutional Church illustrated a peril by which all such Churches are attended. Certain widows, whose chief reason for attaching themselves to the Church had been the prospect of re-

ceiving relief, now found their chief occupation in life in criticising the way the relief was administered. Those of them who were Greeks maintained that the Jewish widows were shown favoritism, and when they said that you may rest assured the Jewesses came back at them word for word.

It was a band of embittered widows looking daggers at one another and at their would-be friends that Peter left in Jerusalem. It was a band of weeping widows, holding up the evidences of their benefactress' kindness while they implored him to give her back to them, that he found at Joppa. It was worth while to stay a few days at Joppa, just to see whether the Jerusalem way of administering relief was as wrong as it seemed and the Joppa way as sane and scientific. In a word, Peter was brought to a comparative study of charity methods, to an investigation of the relative merits of a system whose reliance was upon individual initiative, and of one whose sole reliance was upon an organization. Joppa taught him that the individual almoner could

get along under certain circumstances very nicely in the absence of any organization. Jerusalem taught him that an organization whose distribution of relief is made by functionaries rather than by friends is bound to make a mess of it. We have not been able to get away from that lesson. The later centuries of humanitarian work have but emphasized it. Unquestionably there are times when distribution can be made in no other than the Jerusalem way. Better, then, that distress be relieved by an objectionable method than that it should not be relieved at all. Always it is wisdom when we can not get the absolute best, to take the possible best. The waves of the Gulf are stampeded westward by the winds, and a great city sinks beneath their onslaught while its thousands go homeless. Or yonder by the Golden Gate, Earthquake joins hands with Fire to make a desolation. Obviously in these wholesale disasters relief must likewise be wholesale. Invariably it will call forth many an exhibition of human selfishness, as it did on Zion's hill nineteen centuries

ago, and has in every century since. Nevertheless, when a colossal exigency is upon us we can not wait for the method that offers the minimum of temptation to cupidity. We can only take precautions to keep the number of demoralized persons as small as possible, and then go forward on the ground that the good which will be done will far outweigh the evil. Charity organizations and large-scale distribution are therefore a prime necessity in time of huge catastrophe.

But that does not tell the whole story: they become a necessity as soon as individual giving becomes very general. Suppose that instead of one Tabitha in Joppa there had been a hundred, each stitching for dear life, and each starting out to give away the garments without knowledge or concern whether anybody else was relieving the families for which they were meant. This is what would then have happened if modern experience counts for anything: the garments left by Tabitha No. 1 would be hastily whisked into a hiding-place, and Tabitha No. 2 would be met upon her arrival with

a doleful tale of rags and nakedness. And that would go on and on until some day, when two of these Tabithas would chance to meet on the stairway and discover what a hoax was being practiced upon both of them. That awakening would lead them to say: "We have been going about this thing in a wrong way. We have been overlapping in our work, and educating a certain fraction of the people we have helped in lying and deceitfulness. It will never be better until, when we have an impulse to help a family, there is some place where we can ascertain whether they are receiving help from any other quarter; and if so, how much." In the absence of some such clearing-house of information, the Joppa way of administering relief may prove almost as demoralizing as the Jerusalem way. While I hold no brief for the Associated Charities, it affords me pleasure to say that their methods combine the excellences of Jerusalem and Joppa, and avoid the evils of both. By administering their relief through a friendly visitor, they avoid the evils inciden-

tal to relief by officials; and by requiring a report to the central office of all help given, they avoid the evils incidental to disconnected and duplicated philanthropy. Wherever it exists, the organizations within the Church ought to co-operate with it and avail themselves of its invaluable information.

I should be very sorry to have spoken these few words by way of caution if it were to appear later that somebody was deterred by them from doing as much for the poor as formerly. If you eat in a wrong way, you may bring on a whole train of diseases; but the man who admonishes you of that is not going to lead you to quit eating. All he wants to do, and all you will let him do, is to put you on your guard. It is equally necessary that you keep on feeding your immortal nature; and "who gives himself with his gift" does that, as Lowell has finely said.

It is significant that no mention is made of parents or husband or children among those who wept for Tabitha. If one may argue from that silence, she would seem to

have had none. If so, then in her case the heart's instinct to love found its objects of love in the poor. Would God this were oftener true! It bodes no good, mental or spiritual, to anybody who has been bereft of earth's dearest to sit down and brood over it. Mentally speaking, melancholia, if not also insanity, lies in that direction. Spiritually one is headed for a chronic condition of querulous selfishness. Earth has no sorrow that heaven can not cure, but heaven's prescription is service. If one will not take the medicine, he has no right to expect the cure. "I never could have borne it if I had not had my round of daily duties and found myself compelled to go right on with them:" how often we hear that said! Or this: "I found I was becoming too much absorbed in my own feelings, and that if I did not have a care I was in fair way to become a sensitive plant and a bore. You can not imagine what a help it was to me to have my thoughts directed to the woes of others and to the endeavor to make them happy."

Tabitha in her desolateness might have

said: "I know that doing for others would be my salvation just now, but what can you do in Joppa? Now, if I could go to Jerusalem and be a deaconess, or travel to all parts of the empire as a missionary, that would be something worth while; but here there is nothing to be done, and I am so tied down that I can not go elsewhere." It is greatly to her credit that she did not act on that fallacy. Possibly it was a considerable while before she saw anything near at hand that she could do. But at length she noticed what a hard time a poor widow who lived hard by was having in trying to keep the wolf from the door. Ah, there was one thing she could do, at any rate: she could help that neighbor out of her difficulties. By the time that was done, she heard, of course, of another case, almost as bad; and before long she was wishing that the days were forty-eight hours long, and that her hands were not just a single pair, in order that she might compass all the work she saw waiting to be done. She never knew Joppa had so many widows till she got into this

work; and somehow the whole of them now turned to her in their troubles. She would have been less than human not to be pleased to find herself so trusted, and less than Christian not to be stimulated by their trust to still larger things. Is not that the way it always works! The person who quits saying there is nothing he can do and goes at the first job that offers, finds himself erelong lamenting that he can not begin to do single-handed and alone all he sees to be done.

And then it was not alone among her adult charges that Tabitha found work: the children all knew her and loved her. The little Nathans and Levis might be engaged at the moment she came along in wearing out the tunics she had made them, as fast as red-blooded boys at play can do it, but they all had a glad shout of salute for Miss Tabitha; and the Marys and Hannahs, now primly tricked out in the frocks she had basted, stitched, hemmed, tucked, ruffled, and herring-boned—all with her own blessed hands —they too came flocking around her and vied with one another for the honor of walk-

ing next to her and holding her hand. She took the mystery out of the doctrine of angels for them: that she was one herself, they would have voted without a dissenting voice. It is an old saying that honor imposes obligation. Doubtless she felt this. Who so well as she could tell them of Jesus? All that they loved in her came from Him: she must make them see that, or she would feel that she was obtaining affection under false pretenses. Stephen at Jerusalem had likewise found it impossible to confine himself to almsgiving: it was not long before he was making converts to Christ to an extent which angered the Jews more than any work the apostles themselves were doing. The logical order, indeed, is for those who have relieved the bodies of men, to proceed from that vantage-ground to minister to their souls. A Christian worker who has to go for the preacher every time he finds anybody wanting prayer offered in the sickroom is apt to feel a little shame that it has to be done in that roundabout way, and a little fear that

a case might occur where the sick man would die before the minister could be brought. Besides it is plain that the one who has done most for him, and been most to him, is the person who is logically indicated to pray with him. These considerations have more than once given a tongue to workers, who at the outset could not have believed that their voices would ever be heard in public prayer. Let no one be frightened by this prospect, or say, if doing the work of Tabitha involves a little later on praying by sick-beds and soul-winning, he must be counted out. I do not say that that will always happen: but if it should, the same Father who gives strength for the first step will give strength for each later step.

Say not that this hour has been too much to give to a minor Biblical character. Minor she was not. In that great day when many that are here thought last, and thought of last, shall be first, the Tabithas will get their due. They will be seen to have been among the most impressive preachers of

Christ; to have been the salt of the earth, saving it from the corruption of selfishness and wolfishness; and best of all, to have *loved* many into the Kingdom who could never have been *argued* into it.

X.

THE CONSECRATION OF OUR UTMOST.

"And He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." LUKE 10: 27.

This was the answer given to a young man's question as to which was the great commandment of the Law. The Jews of our Savior's time were given to many such speculations. Their answers, however, were so conflicting that an earnest young man might well be perplexed by them. One rabbi said that the great commandments were those which had to do with ceremonial observances: he laid all stress upon Sabbath-keeping and attendance upon the appointed fasts and feasts. Another held the great commandments to be those which we should call sumptuary: he made much of the wash-

ing of pots as well as of abstinence from forbidden meats. Still another considered the great commandments to be those which had to do with dress: he made much of the breadth of the phylactery. And so it went. If you got nine rabbis together, you had nine codes of ethics. With so many jangling voices in his ears, a young theolog might well be puzzled. It was perfectly intelligible why he should come to the extraordinary Teacher from Nazareth on purpose to ask Him what was the great commandment for a fact. Even now, spite of the Savior's explicitness, there is no little confusion of thought as to what is the great commandment of the moral law, and it behooves us to turn back to this scene and stamp the Master's words upon our minds indelibly.

This old-time questioner, then, came to Jesus asking which was the great commandment, and the answer he got from Him who is the Truth was, "Thou shalt love." This, then, is called the all-inclusive commandment. It is love that will transform

bad men into good men, and good men into better: not dress, nor dietetics, nor ritualism, nor any single virtue, nor all the negative virtues—not these, but love. The old verse which runs, " 'T is love that makes the world go round" might be amended to read, " 'T is love that makes the world go forward."

Of course, I shall ask immediately for the privilege of adding that the love which does this is love worthy of the name, rightly bestowed love, love for the Most High. Our age is cursed with not a little so-called realistic literature, in which whenever the word "love" is used it is applied to something clandestine. Love is not the word to be used in such a case, but lust: and lust transforms good men into bad, and bad men into worse. No, the love that is the fulfillment of the Law is love that dwells fondly on whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report. And because all these excellences meet in Jehovah, Jesus says to us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

But this commandment seems to assume that love is controllable, since it says, "Thou *shalt love.*" Is that true? We had thought differently. To be sure parents sometimes try to control it. They have been known to pick out for their son the maiden whom they considered a good match for him, and then have tried to make him love her: but our observation has been that their success was not encouraging. Ordinarily they have had their labor for their pains. Our phrase is that a man "falls in love." It is not thought of as something premeditated, calculated, sought: rather it is thought of as a consequence of association and affinity. And undoubtedly this view is correct as regards human love. There the eye plays a part as well as the heart. It is character enswathed in flesh and blood that we love. Not so, however, with man's love for God. Here the eye plays no part. Love for Him is brought about by contemplation of His character. It is therefore controllable. If we but muse on Him, the fire will kindle.

Not only so, but this commandment is

more easy of obedience now than ever before. Since it is for His character God is loved, the people of antiquity who dimly apprehended His character must have found it a hard achievement to love Him. There are whole chapters in the Book of Job which show that at times God's character was completely misapprehended: He was thought of as vengeful, jealous, and tyrannical. Naturally enough, men who so thought of Him found it easier to hate than to love Him. But now we know how passing lovely the character of God is. We have seen Him in the face of Jesus Christ. No one can follow the life of the Nazarene without feeling that it is easy to love Him; that one would needs be a man of ice not to warm to Him. But he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. The Son, to be sure, did not appear on earth in the Father's glory: He emptied Himself of that; it was part of His humiliation. But when that single exception is made, no other need be. In the matter of lovableness the Son was an exact facsimile of the Father.

There being no question, then, but that we may bring ourselves by deliberate purpose to love God, the reason why we ought to do it is not far to seek. Every year, as the opening days of September draw nigh, we find ourselves wondering whether our children will like their teachers or not, and hoping they will. Why do we consider that a matter of importance? I need not tell you that it is because we know it to be human nature to do more for one we like than for one we dislike, and to learn faster from one we are fond of than from one we hate. Even the Great Teacher can not do much for persons who do not love Him. It is for this reason that we are urged to love God. It is our business in life to learn of Him, and to become like Him. If we love Him, it will follow that we shall come to Him with an open mind: the portcullis of prejudice will be lifted. If we love Him, we shall be willing to do what He wants us to do, no matter how hard; and some of the tasks He will set us and some of the self-denials He will require of us are bound to

be hard. If you know a woman passionately fond of flowers, her conduct when a good rain comes after long drouth is predictable. The first big drops will scarcely be heard before she will be bustling about getting her pot-plants out into the open where they can get the benefits of it. Love for God will render us a like service. It will set us under the downpour of His grace: there to drink in refreshment, to take on beauty, and to grow amazingly.

Let us pause a moment upon the phrase, "the Lord *thy* God." The better to understand it, come with me to that wonderful generating station at Niagara. Among the striking objects that meet your eyes are several hollow cylinders of cyclopean dimensions: penstocks, they call them. Down through these the water falls to the turbine-wheel at the foot. Each has a length of one hundred and sixty feet: Niagara water has that much head. And how much of it does Wheel Number One get? One hundred and sixty feet: all there is for any wheel. And how much does Wheel No. Two get?

One hundred and sixty feet again. It, too, gets as much as there is for any wheel. If there were a thousand wheels, each would get through its penstock all the head there is. Now listen to Isaiah, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." God's power and love, if we may so say, have that much head: that much ability to drive the enginery of our being. And how much of it may you have? All there is. It is all yours to command. He is the Lord *thy* God.

"O, little heart of mine! shall pain
Or sorrow make thee moan,
When all this God is all for thee,
A Father all thine own?"

I. When Cordelia is reproached by King Lear for not being as warm in her protestations of love for him as her sisters have been, she answers:

"Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty."

Most of us have encountered a similar difficulty when we have come to the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart." If He claims all, where is any to come in for our own flesh and blood? This difficulty disappears if we understand the meaning to be that we are to love the Lord with as much heart as we are capable of: with affections trained to their utmost. Some day the record-breaking trotter of to-day will cover a mile with all the speed he is capable of; but he will have enabled himself to distance on that track all records, including his own, by the good work he has done on every other track. Let that serve as a parable for us. The heart, like every possession of ours, is capable of almost endless development. If it had at the outset the capacity of a teaspoon, we may erelong by diligence give it the capacity of an ocean-bed. Some day, we dare believe, we shall love God with an ardor by contrast with which our love of to-day will seem pitiably small. But when that day comes we shall discover that all the love we have manifested

horizontally has helped to make possible that paramount love which jets upward.

And why does God want us to love Him with as big a heart as it is in us to have? Because He understands the eternal law that what the heart gets from heaven in the way of love will depend upon what it sends up to heaven in kind. Why does earth in ordinary years receive such plentiful showers? It is because it has a misty Atlantic and a broad-bosomed Pacific to heave their vapors skyward. Be admonished by that. See that you have an ocean of love for that sweet-faced being you call mother: you can not make it too broad or too deep. Have another for that father of yours whose every feature spells Integrity. Have another for the brothers and sisters who shouted and danced with you about the Christmas tree in the days of your childhood. Have another for the woman who took you for better, for worse, and took a very formidable contract when she did it. Have another for "all sorts and conditions of men." Have another for the dumb brutes. And then from all these

oceans of love send up the vapor of prayer. Do this, and there can be no question about showers of blessing. Ah, Coleridge was right when he sang,

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God, who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

II. Holding fast to this guiding thought, let us advance to the second clause of this enactment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul." That does not mean that we are to refuse to let our soul delight itself in the hoarse voices of ocean, or in the shifting wonders of cloudland, or in the silvery touch of moonlight. It does not mean that we are to shut up our soul against the charms of Milton and Wordsworth, or that we shall clamp our lips before the Parthenon, lest some incriminating exclamation of pleasure shall issue forth. No, no! what it means is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with a highly developed soul: with all the soul you are capable of; with a soul you have

been at pains to foster to the utmost." A heart trained to the utmost makes the type of person we call affectionate: a soul trained to the utmost makes the type of person we call spiritual. The first member bids us bestow upon God the love of an ardently affectionate nature; the second bids us bestow upon Him the love of a deeply spiritual nature.

The spiritual nature is by great odds the most delicate plant in our soul-garden. It will be choked out if we tolerate too many worldly interests. It will wither away in an atmosphere of personal sin, just as our flowers shrivel to wisps under the scorching breath of rainless days. Let it once die out, and you are no longer a man: you are a desolation. O coax your spiritual nature on and on to its largest life! Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Try meditation. Follow out the filaments of thought until they bring you to vast regions you have not heretofore explored, and seeing yourself a mere abecedarian in God's school, you cry out with

Job: "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Go to nature. Look up into a sky where worlds unnumbered swim above you like fireflies above a meadow, and realize what a midget you are in the universe. Whatever will augment your humility and reverence, whatever will acquaint you with the immensities all about you—save time for that. Then, when you come, with your own spirit keyed to the highest pitch, before the Father of spirits, it will be as when two of Marconi's instruments are in perfect accord. God wants you to love Him with all the soul you are capable of, because no smaller vessel will contain all the revelations He has ready to make to you.

III. The next section of this divine statute strikes out in quite a different direction: it bids us bestow upon God the love of a person physically at his best. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength." The care of the body, Christ would have us understand, is something more than a pru-

dential measure: it is, or ought to be made, a religious exercise as well. Suppose you inexcusably neglect the care of your body: what happens? In so far as its senses are blurred you disqualify yourself for some of earth's higher delights, and at the same time you render yourself somewhat less sensitive to the enormity of sin. It is hard for a superbly sound mind to inhabit an unsound body: some would say it is impossible. This puts us in position to understand why God wants the love of persons who have been at pains to keep themselves physically at their best. If we are out of sorts, we are like telegraph instruments buzzing and sputtering in an electrical storm. God sends us a message of optimism, but our receiver muddles it, and it comes out pessimism. He trumpets forth a Whosoever,

> "But we make His love too narrow,
> By false limits of our own;
> And we magnify His strictness
> With a zeal He will not own."

And this is only one reason why we need to exercise health precautions. He expects

some things of us which we never do rightly when we are feeling badly. For one thing, He expects us to exemplify His own providence in our care of the lower animals. But as a matter of fact these faithful servants of man are soon made to know it if he has a sore head or a case of nerves. Years ago we noted that our farm-hands, when feeling wretched from having been up till daylight at some carousal, always took it out on the horses. You could almost tell by counting the cruel welts upon their haunches how many hours of sleep their driver had lost.

Then, too, God expects us to illustrate His loving Fatherhood by our own fatherhood. But our torpid livers make us irritable: and some day, when we are particularly snappish, we stand a chance of snapping forever the tie that binds our boy to us. Let him once get out of touch with his father, and there is no telling how far he may drift. O, many a parent who has slipped a cog in his kindness some neuralgic day has had occasion ever afterwards to echo the words of Hood:

"The wounds I might have healed,
The human sorrow and smart;
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part.
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart."

IV. One section more exhausts the great commandment. It bids us bestow upon God the love of a person intellectually at his best: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind." A considerable fraction of our religious public has yet to feel that this is binding. The very moderate attempt we are making to debar from the ministry candidates who have not so much as had high-school training elicits fulminations that we are putting our standard too high. The urgency with which we ply young men looking towards the ministry first to get the best preparation college and seminary can give, is met and often counteracted by the assurance of their misguided friends that if they spend all those years in the dry classroom they will lose their fire and zeal. Is it not amazing that such things can be! Turn

to the works of God, and what do you find? Everywhere evidences of Divine Mind. Why, the would-be wranglers of Cambridge, in seeking simply to follow the mathematics involved in astronomy, have recourse to wet towels bound about their foreheads to keep their brains from reeling at the task. Turn to the Word of God, and what do you find? Everywhere the evidences again of profound mind. Why should it be thought a thing debatable for any man, be he preacher or layman, to educate himself to the farthest possible limit, that he may drop his plummet farther into the great deep of God's thought. Really, it is too late in the world's history to question the insistency of this duty. The work God expects of us in the home, as citizens exercising the right of suffrage, and as exponents of His gospel—all this demands that we have minds as richly stored with knowledge and as well disciplined to correct thinking as it is possible for us to make them. I would to God that every American hamlet might send up to the university as many boys as a Scotch hamlet

of the same size but not half the wealth would send. I would that every person past school age were keeping up his student habits and were bent upon mastering the great books of the world. Could that be, Sunday school classes would be better taught; prayer-meetings would be fresher and more profitable; sermons would fare better alike in the hands of the makers and the hearers of them; the Church would appeal more powerfully than it now does to all classes.

XI.

SAVORLESS SALT.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." MATT. 5: 13.

Among the minor sights which impress a visitor to a great city are the immense loads of bulk salt which may be seen in transit to the abattoirs. He is made to realize how very large is the use of salt as a preservative. Were our climate subtropical, as was the climate of Palestine, and the manufacture and use of ice unknown, as it was there, our dependence upon salt for this purpose would be vastly greater. Salt in the Land of the Book was the prime if not the only preservative from corruption. Our Lord seized upon this fact and made use of it to illustrate Christian obligation. To His first disciples,

and through them to all later ones, He says, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

In each of the manifold forms of human life there is a liability, not to say tendency, to corruption. What men commence in the spirit too often ends in the flesh. A galaxy of disinterested patriots draft a constitution with an elaborate system of checks and balances to preclude the usurpation or misuse of power: but the ink is scarcely dry before perverse ingenuity sets itself to the discovery of means of driving a coach and six between its clauses. And unless the guardians of the constitution exhibit a patriotism as lofty and disinterested as that which actuated its framers, that sacred instrument, through its very silences and the unavoidable ambiguities of language, will be made a shield for evil-doing, though designed to be a preventive. A great political party is born amid the throes of a mighty moral movement: the cementing bond in its incipiency being the desire to compass some much-needed reform. But this same party of auspicious birth may, and indeed will, quickly degenerate into a

coterie of spoilsmen, with bandit leaders and piratical methods, unless its best members retain the spirit of its founders and find means to make their influence effective. A village huzzas and illuminates over the advent of a new railroad or factory, and boyishly writes itself down "City" long before it has attained that magnitude: but when it becomes a city in fact, it too often discovers that its government now, instead of being by its best citizens as of old, has come to be by almost its worst.

In commercial life, as well as in political, this tendency to demoralization is obvious, and every age has its own peculiar manifestation of it, the present times forming no exception. "Live and let live" was once the motto of the business world, and properly so. But we have fallen upon days of gigantic combinations whose practice is to give an independent no quarter, and whose summons to him to surrender is that of the buccaneer, "Join our ranks or walk the plank." And this is but half of the dark story. While monopoly's right hand wields the

bludgeon, its left is full of bribes. No city ring, such as have made American municipal government a hissing and a reproach among the nations, could hold together a twelve-month were only those contributions to its funds to cease which come from so-called respectable corporations, contributions made either to secure or to hold unmolested some pernicious privilege.

Nor is it alone in the realms of politics and of business that this tendency downwards may be seen. The social world is not without its evidences of the same sort. America not so very long since held a proud pre-eminence in the matter of total abstinence from the use of intoxicating beverages. But is she not fast losing it? Employers tell us that in cities at least the total abstainer among male wage-workers is now the exception rather than the rule. Nor is it alone in the wage-working class that this change is to be observed. In all the environs of our great cities the bottled-beer wagon calls at private residences with the same regularity as the grocery wagon; and the num-

ber of houses where no deliveries are ever made is distressingly small. From the observation of such facts, and from the study of the per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages (a consumption far greater during the last fiscal year than ever before) we are forced to the conclusion that while America may be growing less drunken, it is growing more bibulous.

To turn from one distasteful aspect of social life to another, we may mention the present-day gambling mania. In two directions recent years have seen an ominous increase in gambling. One of these is upon turf events. Until comparatively recently the form of racing most affected by Brother Jonathan was not the one that lends itself most readily to betting. Latterly all that has changed, and the running race, with its hateful accessories of bookmakers and pool-rooms, has come in like a flood. A country so vast as ours affords climate suitable for such racing somewhere all the year round. It has come to pass that there is no month in the twelve when bets may not be placed

on some pending race. Our cities have numerous places that tempt to it. The daily newspaper that comes to our hands gives betting tips and odds, coupled with reports of dazzling winnings. Small wonder that along with all this machinery of temptation there should so often be a re-enactment of the tragedy of Judas, with its three acts of embezzlement, remorse, and suicide. The other direction in which the gambling propensities of our people has received portentous encouragement has been upon the turns of the market. The bucket shop and the get-rich-quick concern have penetrated to the hamlet. Thousands of dollars go annually to them even from rural counties. The statement is made by express agents, postal registry clerks, and others in position to know. And perhaps the worst feature of it all is the comment one hears: the persons guilty are spoken of as Simple Simons, rather than as sinners against common honesty. The plunger is not exactly a blackleg, but he is a first cousin to him.

Another deplorable tendency that sadly

needs a check is moral cowardice and perjury. We have of late numerous investigations of public servants charged with graft. Such investigations are made unnecessarily difficult by the conduct of people in general. You can get scores of persons to tell you what they know off the witness-stand; you can get almost nobody to tell you what they know on the witness-stand. The better element do not want to become involved in it, or to incur the ill-will of the unscrupulous element. Witnesses of the baser sort, on the other hand, exalt it into a sort of religion not to tell on one another. But however it comes about, the fact remains that we have a veritable epidemic of perjury. One of our prominent lawyers who has had many a disheartening experience of this sort with witnesses, says it has passed into a proverb among the profession that "only fools and children tell the truth." An exaggeration, you will say. True enough, but would God there were nothing to build the exaggeration on!

The stage of our day, even on the admis-

sion of its most friendly critics, is undergoing a steady deterioration. The demand now being heard for a subsidized theater is a straw indicating the widespread conviction that at present the stage of our country is a discredit. The majority of the playhouses in our larger cities are under the control of syndicates made up for the most part of men who do not care a rap for art or morals—whose motto rather is anything to earn dividends. More and more they are prostituting the boards to appeal to the sensual and the brutish in man. Prize-fighters, innocent of nothing save histrionic talent, have leading parts given them and strut the stage before applauding hero-worshipers. Lesser lights in the pugilistic world engage in so-called sparring matches before the footlights, in which it is nothing unusual for one of the principals to be knocked senseless. The intervals between such exhibitions are filled in with performances that would bring the blush to the cheeks of Herodias and her daughter, and these monstrous things go on on Sundays as well as week days.

Nor is the literary life of our age exempt from this proneness to decadence. With somewhat of Pharisaism we read the literature of the Elizabethan period (not aloud or in mixed company: for the most part it does not admit of that), and we lay the flattering unction to our souls that such coarseness of jest or such ribaldry of song would be impossible in our day. But is the advance real or apparent, merely? Unquestionably there is less evil bluntness of phrase now than then; but is there not more suggestiveness in the situation? Less is blurted out, but more is conveyed by innuendo. The reaction against a prurient form of realism is far from having accomplished its needed work as yet. Perhaps no book of our day was written to fill an order as brutally frank as that accredited to a certain London publisher who said, "I want four hundred pages when printed, with violation of the Seventh Commandment either contemplated or consummated"—but many of them read as if they might have been. Their interest is made to center upon some invasion of the

sanctities of the home. Their heroes are persons who chafe at the old-fashioned moral restraints imposed by the Lord and His Anointed until they bring themselves to say, "Let us burst their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

It may be thought an abuse of language to speak of daily newspapers under the head of literature. If ever in the days of signed editorials from men of national reputation, and of book reviews and poems from writers who were past masters of their craft, they merited this designation, that time has passed. Still they constitute the nearest approach to literature that many of our busy people read with any regularity or system, and on this account they are deserving of scrutiny. It is idle to say that they do but reflect the morals of their clientele, and are no worse. Our national tendency to confound bigness with greatness is certainly not so extreme, in general, as it is in the thirty-six or forty-eight-page paper. Our Yankee inquisitiveness (some would say impertinence) blushes for the excesses of this omni-

present Paul Pry. Our weakness for a powerful vocabulary stands abashed before the overstatements of this new Munchausen. No! the lying, prying, prurient press does not represent us.

But while we enter indignant protest against such an inference, let us not shut our eyes to certain discreditable truths. It is the so-called "yellow" journal that pays best, and earns for its proprietor a fortune that can not be expressed with less than seven figures. It is this type of paper that is bought most on Sunday—the worst sheet on the best day. It is this very salable because very salacious sheet that gets the cream of the advertising business—Christian business houses by no means always to be excepted. In buying such papers and advertising in them every person is helping, however little he intends it, to compel other journals, at present reputable, to come to the same disreputable level. We have only to adhere to such a course to make the "yellow" journal of to-day pale in comparison with the evolution from it to-morrow.

It is but natural, after this survey of present-day evil tendencies, some of which seem almost unchecked, to ask where is the Christian contingent of society, and what has it been doing all this while? And there is Scriptural warrant for such a question. Our Christ expects of His adherents not alone that they shall attempt to check the advance of corruption, but that they actually succeed. Nay, more! He tells them that if they fail in this, they may expect to be held in contempt. "If the salt have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

That we are dangerously near this humiliating position, current events strongly apprise us. When the continuance in office of such incorruptible patriots as Seth Low and George Waring was at stake, and a well and unfavorably known political organization dared to flaunt in the face of a great Christian community this as its campaign motto, "To hell with reform!" and then won, its attitude toward moral issues hav-

ing been made thus unmistakably plain; when the Parisian system of dealing with the social evil is being surreptitiously introduced in our cities in spite of the fact that Christian sentiment has voted it down every time the chance has been given; when race-track and bucket-shop gambling are openly, not to say obtrusively, carried on in spite of the fact that the Christian public has secured pages of enactments against them, does it not appear that contempt, the inexorable penalty of inefficiency, is already being visited upon us? Who can deny, in the light of such facts, that in some directions the salt has already become savorless, while in certain others it is fast becoming so. To discover how this insipidity has become either a fact or a menace is our first and imperative duty.

Without doubt it is in part traceable to excessive partisanship. Evildoers are independents. The fact that liquor dealers, for instance, voted one way last year, makes it by no means certain that they will vote the same way this year. They will, if the same

party will do better by them than the other, or as well; but otherwise they will not. The like is true of a corrupt commercialism. One of its best exponents declared in an utterance that has become historic "that in a Republican county he was a Republican, and in a Democratic, a Democrat; but whichever he was, and wherever he was, he was for his railroad first, last, and all the time." Party managers, knowing that these people are independents because they have axes to grind, try to make it plain to them that as a return for their votes their axes will be ground. Regarding the classes who have some moral issue at heart, they would seem to reason: "These people can be held in line by mere promises." And let good people but carry a blind loyalty to party far enough, then party managers will even cease to make promises. A promise to enact the wished-for measure might frighten to the other side a few voters whose craft would seem endangered, and who could not be convinced that the promises were not meant to

be kept: and so even that risk must not be run.

To a misconception of the function of the pulpit a part of the inanity of the Christian element of society must be credited. Let a minister discuss the questions I have touched upon to-day, or others close akin, and some shoulders will shrug, and some tongues will wag to the refrain, "Why does n't our pastor preach the simple gospel?" The very witty and original will have something to say as to the advisability of a shoemaker sticking to his last; and the cynical will give vent to a jeremiad upon the sensationalism of the clergy. It is to be feared that many a preacher holds his peace rather than stem this storm. It is assumed in this outcry that whatever does not deal specifically with the inner life is not gospel. Now, it is presumable that our Savior knew what the gospel was and how to preach it. Did He confine Himself to instruction in reference to the inner life? Far from it. His was an age when both State and Church

—those two props of earthly contentment—were rotten. He did not consider it alien to the gospel to stigmatize Herod—that compound of lechery and treachery—as a fox; to characterize the divorce laws of His time, which allowed a man to put away his wife on any slightest whim, as infamous; nor to denounce the mercenary ecclesiastics of the day as whited sepulchers. An existing abuse was to Him a challenge to mortal combat. Once, when His bosom friends proposed to Him that they settle down comfortably on the mountain-top and cultivate raptures, He peremptorily recalled them to the valley, where devils were to be cast out and oppressors thwarted. Next to sin itself He hated religious dilettanteism. Indeed, this is the crowning sin of omission. Those splendid locomotives we saw in the Transportation Building were, for the time being, mere toys. They had been jacked up until the drive-wheels did not touch the rails by three inches, and so spun ineffectually in the air. It was not necessary to hoist them fifty

feet to make their movements count for nothing. A hair's breadth would have answered. Nor is it necessary for the Christians of a community to retire to some island in mid-ocean to cut off all effective connection with the world. If they do but harbor the notion that the Church exists simply for the promotion of ecstasies, the work will be done as surely as ever it was by thorough-paced anchoritism.

But enough of diagnosis. Bad as the case is, it is not incurable. What may be accomplished in the rehabilitation of the Church, the revival in which our own communion had its birth illustrates. The century preceding had been one of shameless looseness. The court of the Stuarts was a brothel; the clergy of the period were pleasure-loving hirelings; the gentry were wont to drink to beastly intoxication at every feast; the peasantry were in manners and morals but one remove from the brute.

And these conditions must have been perpetuated if the figure of our text held good

in every particular. For salt once leached out can not again be made saline, and meat once tainted can not again be made fresh. But, God be praised, a dead Church may be revived, and a corrupt age purified. The England of to-day is as different from the England of the Restoration as light is from darkness. It is not too much to hope that erelong our commercial life, our political life, and our social life will be purged from their wolfishness, their sensualism, and their materialism. But settle it as an immovable truth that this betterment will never come through some automatic process of evolution. Let us have done with the misuse of words: this is not optimism, it is stark nonsense rather. Increase of appetite for things evil grows by what it feeds upon. It will not be checked, much less eradicated, unless each of us becomes a physician in ordinary. The part any single grain of salt may have in preserving meat from putrefaction may be inappreciably small, but if each grain have saline quality, the work will

be done. So, too, the part any single unit in society may have in purifying the whole may seem infinitesimal, but God only asks of you that you suffer Him to fill you with Himself, and that thus equipped you do for Him your best, and, through the millions doing this, the world will be made His Kingdom.

XII.

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." 1 SAM. 12: 23.

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart." 1 SAM. 12: 24.

This is one of the great utterances of the Bible. It took a great man to feel as his words bore evidence that he felt. We thank him for the tremulous outburst. It comes so unexpectedly from him. It reveals a side of his nature we were not prepared to find. For if hitherto his character had seemed Alpine in its loftiness and proportions, so also had it seemed Alpine in its cold austerity. But lo, beneath the edge of its snow-cap we find the edelweiss blooming. Man of God that he was, he conjoined in himself the severity and the goodness of God.

Samuel, the speaker, was in the act of laying down the reins of leadership; was doing it in full consciousness of all it involved; was painfully sensible that it meant a complete severance of the relations which hitherto had bound him to Israel. Yesterday their loyalty had been his to claim and enjoy: to-morrow it would be Saul's to claim and enjoy; and properly so. For him henceforth to revisit the cities of Israel with any frequency would be an imprudence. Should he ever in the future so far forget himself as to intermeddle in Israelitish affairs with his advice and suggestions, it would amount to an impertinence and a sin against a brother who also was among the prophets. But while for him, as a considerate and self-respecting man, these ways of serving Israel were from that moment to be hedged up, one way remained unobstructed. He was like Cuthbert when a snowstorm drove his boat on the coast of Fife. "The snow closes the road along the shore; and the storm bars our way over sea: what shall we do?" mourned his comrades. "There is still the

way of heaven that lies open," answered the saint of God. Samuel found consolation in the thought that he could still pray for the people whom years of fellowship had taught him to love.

It goes without saying, too, that he did not spoil all this the next moment by a reaction of thought. He did not then or ever come to feel that prayer in behalf of a people was a puny little thing for a man to have to fall back on, who had been accustomed to give labors in their behalf. He did not think slightingly of prayer. No man ever does who has dwelt in the secret place of the Most High. There is no mightier enginery we can put under humanity for its uplift.

He would seem, however, to have discerned certain sinister consequences sure to follow any failure of his to keep up his prayers for Israel, which we would not have been as quick to descry. For instance, we can see readily enough how it would have been a sin against his own soul. If instead of the words he uses he had said, "God for-

bid that I should wrong my own soul by ceasing to pray for you," that language would have been instantly intelligible to us. The man who carries to the throne of grace only the people with whom he is at that particular moment linked up, is like a motor-car with only one cylinder: it gets only one push to the revolution. Small wonder if sometimes it moves wearily and unsteadily. But the man who carries to the mercy-seat all the several companies with which in the years agone he has kept holy-day, gets a thousand impulsions forward and upward in a single revolution of the year. This sin against the soul is one of the commonest. Clergymen who pass out of the active pastorate into other forms of ecclesiastical service forget with sad frequency not only their various pastorates, but also the experiences and viewpoint of the pastoral vocation. Their interest which once was personal, becomes connectional; and that is always a change attended with great loss. It transforms a man into a functionary. Bishop Wiley spoke with great acumen when he

said, "The high places are the cold places." Much that goes by the name of "elevation" is like the elevation of mountains: a point is reached where life is chilled out, where the granite comes to the surface, and where glaciers are formed.

So, too, we can instantly see how Samuel would have sinned against Israel if he had ceased to pray for them. A people who had given him years of love and loyalty, who had "imparted to him in vapor all that he gave back to them in shower," had deserved at his hands something better than neglect. It is as unholy an act for a leader of men to win a people's love, and then treat it like a cheap thing, as it is for a man to so win and so treat the love of a good woman. It is something as sweet and sacred as a betrothal, and the word for us to whisper to our soul is that we are to love and to cherish till death us do part.

But while it is perfectly plain how he would have been sinning against his own soul and against Israel in ceasing to pray for them, it is not at once so apparent what

he means when he intimates that he would be chiefly sinning against the Lord. However, we are going to venture a guess as to the soliloquy that preceded this utterance. In our fancy we hear the good old man saying to himself: "If I can only manage to keep up my prayers for Israel, the practice will debar from my heart certain evil dispositions such as envy, jealousy, and pessimism, that otherwise would enter and would be positively hateful to the Lord. So long as I honestly pray for Israel I shall never secretly hope nor openly prophesy that Saul will make a failure in trying to lead them. Prayers for them will have to include him, and will rejoice to include him."

By virtue of our Methodist itinerancy we are able to enter into the old prophet's feelings. We, too, suffer severances so sudden and profound that they leave our hearts aching. We, too, need to have on the panoply of prayer to keep out certain poisoned darts that else would pierce to the center of our life. We, too, are not so destitute of the quality of grateful remembrance as not

to wish still to serve at long range a people whom once we served at close. Thank God it is possible through prayer!

If, then, from our present field it is possible through intercession to be serviceable to those off in a field we once occupied, what use shall we make of our chance? What spiritual gift shall we ask that they may have? With the advantage of distance and perspective, what shall we consider the primary need of the Church? Samuel's ideas on this point are good enough for us. He had what strikes us as exactly the right view. His uppermost desire for them was that they might have an abiding, overtowering, overmastering CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD. His words, "Fear the Lord," amount to just that. His emphatic "only"—italicized by its position—reminds us of Bismarck's historic utterance, "We Germans fear God, and none other."

Really it takes this consciousness of God to make a *Church* at all. When the Scriptures speak of the Church of the living God,

more is meant than an institution founded by God; more than an institution set to disseminate the truth of God: pre-eminently it is meant that the Church is an institution whose members believe that God liveth, reigneth, and rewardeth them that diligently seek Him. Without such a pervasive, transmuting faith it may perhaps be a seed-plot for the cultivation of the delightful amenities of life, or it may be an efficient league for social service, but a Church it can not be. Only in the proportion that it has the consciousness of God is it a Church and is able properly to do the work of the Church.

There must be this same consciousness before there can be any worthy *worship*. Without it our acts of piety become as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean. You can not have failed to notice how widespread in our day is the conviction that something is wrong with our public worship. If it were what it ought to be, it would not be so largely neglected: the sad chapter of declining church attendance would never have been written. This is our premise: now

what is our conclusion? A strange medley of conclusions, I am bound to say. Sometimes the inference is that the magnet to draw non-churchgoers must be a succession of devotional novelties. Yielding to this belief there are Churches within our range of knowledge that just as appropriately as the moving picture shows might hang out the sign, "A complete change of program with each performance." In plain English, they have entered into competition with places of amusement, and are invariably worsted in the competition. Sometimes the attempt to arrest neglect of worship is made by hip-hip-hurrah methods: a company of men under high pressure entering into an ironclad compact to attend each divine service for a stipulated period of time. They do not mean to break the covenant they make, but nevertheless they usually do break it. O friends, we shall not greatly improve public worship, nor make it permanently attractive by trying to reach men by pictures or pageantry through the Eye-gate; nor through the Ear-gate by paradoxes, extrav-

agances, and sensational utterances. Nor has the genius yet arisen who can give us a worked-up attendance that shall at the same time be a non-collapsible attendance. The only company of worshipers to be counted on for steadfastness are those that come like doves to their windows and like harts to the water-brooks. Small hopes are to be cherished from movements that proceed on the assumption that man is all eye, and will come and keep coming to see somebody do stunts; or from movements that assume that man is all ear, and will come and keep coming to hear somebody violate the proprieties of speech for the glory of God; nor from movements which assume that man is a buffalo, and can be stampeded into the Kingdom. It is time to hark back to the old-fashioned truth that man is a *living soul;* to remember that the roots of the rush and the flag are no more made for water than the souls of men are made for God. In a former parsonage my kitchen-drain one day in mid-winter suddenly became completely stopped up. I hastily covered the top of the

range with hot-water kettles and spent the next two hours trying to thaw the drain open. Failing in that, I turned to the use of chemicals, thinking that grease rather than ice might be the mischief-maker; but nothing came of that, either. Proceeding to more drastic measures, I had the drain taken up; and presto, the riddle was solved! The root of a tree had come feeling along the drain in search of water. In some mysterious way it had divined that what it wanted was to be had inside. It had found an entrance through a crevice. Then others came, and forced the entrance wider, and so it went. In one way or another the Lord added daily to the number of root-fibers, such as were having their thirst assuaged. They filled and packed the drain from wall to wall and from end to end. The plumber acted as if that was nothing unusual, and even went so far as to maintain that roots could scent water from afar, and would change their course and make for it. As to the truth of that I can not speak, but I do have an unfaltering faith that if the Church

can be made a place where the presence of God is felt, men with souls made for God will come to it impelled by an inward urgency.

We do well to be suspicious of all other kinds of zeal, however much they may promise at the outset. For instance, just now some righteous souls are greatly vexed at the marked success of a mid-week meeting which is at the farthest remove from our prayer-meetings. The testimonies heard there run so strangely to our ears: as for instance, "I had what the uninitiated call lumbago; but I kept whispering to myself, 'This is nothing but mortal mind, mortal mind, mortal mind,' and in less time than it takes to tell it I found myself lively as a cricket." Or: "There was once a time when I came to have a lemon-yellow color, and everybody told me it was due to a torpid liver. But I refused to admit that I was saturated with bile, and maintained that I was only saturated with error; and presently the brown-paper taste in my mouth disappeared, and my complexion became as fair

as a baby's." Are you perturbed over the vogue of this? Are you one of those who insist that the Church should take up psychotherapy? Can't you rather now and forever preserve your serenity by remembering that there is not enough in the healing of the body and care of the body to make a religion. A zeal that builds on that is building on a flimsy foundation. In the nature of the case it must needs be a temporary zeal.

Possibly, too, recent elections have awakened some tremors among the people of God. No class of voters has increased of late so rapidly as those who make their peculiar brand of politics almost a religion: a very materialistic religion, if the truth be told. By the same token it can never permanently become a substitute for the faith once delivered to the saints. There is not enough in hours of labor, wages, equality of opportunity, and governmental control of the machinery of production and distribution to make a religion. Doubtless some of these are the major ingredients of the

problem of making a living, but they are decidedly minor ingredients of the bigger problem of making a life. The life is more than meat. It does not consist in the abundance of the things one possesseth. Man can not live by bread alone. The life which is life indeed is only attained when the soul finds God. There is no promise of perpetuity for that school of political thinkers whose German spokesman said, "Our ideal for government is republicanism, for industry socialism, and for religion atheism." The Church of God ought to get into position to catch these tangential multitudes on the rebound, for a rebound is among the certainties. The day of disillusionment is coming, as come it must to every movement that slurs over the life of the spirit. Meanwhile the Church ought right now to be the home of more zeal and intensity than can be found in any other quarter. Why not? Its pulses are stirred by no mere catchwords or fads, but by the imperishable fact of God and His Fatherhood.

But though it is much for the consciousness of God to make of an organization a Church, to make worship heartfelt, and zeal intense, these are far from being the only services it renders. It is besides the only prescription that will bring *consistency of life.* Samuel had the holy astuteness to see this; and he warns his people here that just so surely as they forget God, they will "turn aside and go after vain things that can not profit nor deliver." Some god you are bound to have. You are built that way. If it is not the Living God, it will be some false god. Idolatry is not obsolete in America. It tempts us constantly, though insidiously. We know it, and we let the secret out in our language. We have names for enough modern gods to make quite a considerable pantheon. There is the Almighty Dollar, and The Great God Success, and Pleasure with a hundred hands like Briareus to beckon us, and Demos and Ego, and the Lord only knows how many more. Martineau puts the case not one whit too

strongly when he says, "Every man's highest, nameless though it be, is his living God."

Hear Samuel pleading with his loved people to give God the monopoly of their hearts and energies: "Only serve the Lord." It is the word most needed still. It was almost the first word that fell from the lips of our Christ, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." He admonishes us that we shall get along very well so long as God monopolizes our fealty, but that trouble will begin the moment any false god comes in to ask for share and share alike. Centuries before Stevenson wrote the strange story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Jesus forewarned the world that no man could serve two masters: if he took one hand from the Most High to give it to some groveling, low-down thing, it was only a question of time till the low-down thing would get both of his hands and hold them in the grip of a vise. Altering His figure, He said that no man would have trouble in perceiving moral distinctions, so

long as he saw single, so long as God filled the field of his vision. But let him begin to see double, and his body would soon be full of moral darkness. Under certain circumstances men see double. The poet Burns, for instance, in one of those devil-may-care verses that so often mar his finest pages, reminds a chum of a night they once made of it together in Poosie Nancy's tavern, and of the fact that on their fuddled journey home they saw not one moon in the sky, but two. That state we call intoxication. But what, then, shall we call its moral counterpart? What shall we say of the man who can not see duty without simultaneously seeing danger? What of the man who can not see Principle without seeing at her side Expediency offering him a larger golden apple? Let me say this in all solemnity, that the man who to-day can not see duty without its attending danger is headed towards a point where he shall not see duty at all for seeing danger. The man who can not to-day see Principle dissociated from Expediency will by and by be unable

to see Principle at all for seeing Expediency. The man who to-day is keeping his eyes on both God and Mammon will in the near future have no eyes except for Mammon. The word amethyst has a curious history. The two Greek words which compose it mean "not drunken." And this is the history: ancient banqueters of careful turn went to table wearing a ring with this stone carved into a cameo for a set. As the revel proceeded, they glanced at the ring from time to time, and as soon as they found the delicate lines of the cameo beginning to blur, or found the cameo seeming to separate into two, they knew it was time to call a halt on themselves. If any man is unable to see God alone, that fact spells intoxication. I care not what the source of his intoxication may be—whether Money, or Office, or Success, or the Pace that Kills—the one outstanding fact is that it is time for him to sober up and regain an eye that can see single.

I must be allowed, though I do it with reluctance, to make an application of this

thought to the question of personal purity. A great deal of purity literature that comes to my desk seems to me to strike a false note. It makes its appeal to Fear, where it ought to make its appeal to Conscience. It talks pathology where it ought to talk moral defilement. If in these days of unexampled medical discovery some antitoxin were found for those scourges with which men are scourged for their pleasant vices, and innocent wives and children are scourged along with them, then these pamphleteers, who seem to have no God but the human body, would have no argument left. Could they wonder if a people whom they had tried to restrain only by fear ran into a riot of licentiousness when once it seemed to them that there was no bodily ill longer to be feared?

Looking at the matter from another angle, the most insidious poison against which the friends of purity have to contend is the whisper that goes from mouth to ear —constantly in youth's loafing-places; frequently on the campus; and occasionally, to

their shame be it said, in the offices of some physicians who are a dishonor to a most honorable profession—the whisper that, though the Seventh Commandment may forbid any slightest departure from chastity, the body requires it. It is appalling how often that devilish sophistry is uttered and accepted as though it were law and gospel. Our boys will never be able to withstand it unless they have been trained to get their morality from Sinai, and not from any pseudo-hygiene: unless they have been taught to take the Lord's side, as against the body's even if it could be proved, as it never can, that God commands one thing and Physiology commands the opposite.

For my last thought, namely, the power of the consciousness of God to put new life into one, I am indebted to a suggestion gotten the other day while reading a book on Euthenics. As Eugenics seeks to emphasize the right of children to be well-born, so Euthenics seeks to emphasize their right to be well-raised. In the chapter on the Home

the book said it was now believed that the real reason had been found why infant mortality was notably less in the home than in institutions, spite of the fact that the institution was generally the more sanitary of the two. It said that a sick babe is wretched beyond anything we dream of. It does not need a push to make it go out of the world: if there is nothing to pull it back, it will go. Here is where the sick baby in the home has the advantage: when it opens its listless eyes, it looks up into a mother's eyes and sees them full of unmeasured wistfulness, tenderness, and love. A world with that face in it is good enough to stay on in. All instinctively it begins to try to stay! and by and by it shows that it can grip life as tightly as its tiny hand can grip mother's finger. O, there are times when the soul gets weary of struggle to the point of giving up. But like a surge the second thought comes, that a world with the Face in it which we see bending over us in infinite love and sympathy is a wonderfully good world to stay in and work in. What could we have

been thinking about when we were wishing for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest! We can endure, seeing Him. O, better than that! it will be a joy to toil, sacrifice, spend and be spent, if by such means we may evince our love for Him whose love is everything to us, and has made us everything we are.